









MOTOR INDUSTRY CARMAKER SAYS IT IS STILL NEGOTIATING DEAL TO SAVE \$2.7bn INVESTMENT

BMW seeks to reassure workers at Rover plant

By John Griffiths in London

BMW, the German carmaker, and Stephen Byers, the trade and industry secretary, yesterday attempted to ease the fears of Rover Group workers that a £1.7bn (\$2.7bn) investment at Rover's Longbridge plant in the West Midlands has been imperilled by an inadequate offer of UK government aid.

plunged into crisis. He was "confident that we will be able to arrive at a successful conclusion." People close to the talks yesterday indicated there was a basic misunderstanding about the nature of the aid negotiations.

Government cash hand-outs table with columns: Automotive and project, Date, Amount awarded (£m)

regard as an opening gambit. Those close to the negotiations suggest the offer is likely to be raised over the next few days.

night by the announcement of a £1.1bn (£956m) net loss for Rover last year, much higher than expected.

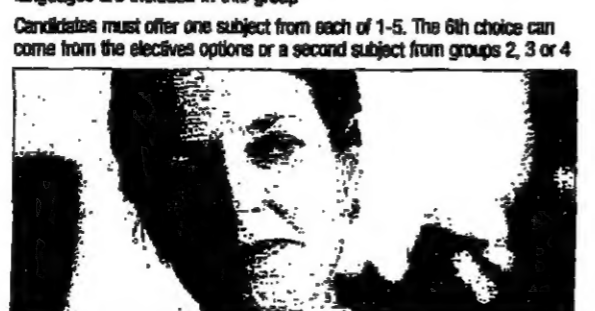
BMW envisages an entirely new production facility at Longbridge, to build a new family of vehicles from 2002.

Examination reform fails to achieve top marks

Private schools may introduce the International Baccalaureate as an alternative to new British qualifications, writes Simon Targett

Halleybury, a leading private school and Alma Mater of Clement Alistair, first postwar prime minister of the Labour government, is set to introduce the International Baccalaureate next year, it emerged yesterday.

- What a baccalaureate covers: 1 Language A - English or the student's native language, 2 Language B - second modern language, 3 Individuals and societies - history, geography, economics, business, philosophy, IT, 4 Experimental sciences - biology, chemistry, physics, design/technology, 5 Mathematics, 6 Electives - including art, music, theatre arts.



Baroness Blackstone

It could turn into a full-scale rebellion by the private sector if, as expected, other private schools air their reservations about the new A-level papers - which will be available from September 2000 - at a summit meeting of the country's premier private school head teachers in Leeds, in northern England, next week.

chester College, in the south-west of the country, is toying with teaching the continental Europe-style examination instead of the reformed A-level.

for the brightest pupils. These tests, which caught teachers' leaders by surprise, would supplement a new AS qualification - allowing sixth-formers the chance to study up to five subjects in the first year of post-16 school - and a new specialist qualification known as A2 - enabling pupils to take three of the AS subjects to a higher level.

master of Halleybury, said: "I am concerned that the proposals for the revamped A-levels will not achieve breadth and may lead to a lowering of standards."

He added that universities would need to make the AS qualification a condition of entry "otherwise there will be no take-up of this exam in schools", even if it turns out to be academically tough.

Mr Westley estimates about 20 of 130 pupils at Halleybury may sign up for the IB.

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, by a group of educationists including Kurt Hahn, founder of Gordonstoun, the Scottish academy which schooled the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Elizabeth's husband, and the Prince of Wales, their eldest son.

It is controlled by the International Baccalaureate Office in Geneva. More than 35,000 students are examined in nearly 100 countries.

It remains possible that Baroness Blackstone could win over the sceptical head of Britain's top private schools when she addresses their summit meeting next week.

N Ireland police body attacks collusion claim

By John Murray Brown in Dublin and Jimmy Burns in London

Northern Ireland's police authority yesterday hit back at nationalist allegations of official collusion in this week's murder of the lawyer Rosemary Nelson, accusing unnamed politicians of using her killing as a "platform to attack the Royal Ulster Constabulary" [the region's police force].

Commission yesterday published its annual report confirming that it had expressed "grave concerns" about an RUC investigation last year into claims by Mrs Nelson that she had received death threats from the police. A report by London's Metropolitan Police into the allegations is to be submitted to Mrs Nelson's family on Monday.

plaints reported on the fact that it doubted the RUC's handling of Rosemary Nelson's allegations.

The RUC brought in a senior English police officer and the FBI to help in the investigation, and John Guido, the FBI legal attache. They said the "application of local knowledge and intelligence" offered the best chance of catching Mrs Nelson's killers.

Mr McGinn refused to stand as he received three life sentences for the murders of Mr Restorick and two other soldiers killed during a 20-year period in south Armagh, near the border with the Irish republic.

France and Italy, however, attach strong political importance to the collaborative project and believe it is vital for European defence co-operation. They want concrete evidence of UK support for European integration on security policies.

\$13bn frigate deal in balance

By Alexander Nicoll, Defence Correspondent

A last-ditch attempt to rescue the troubled £2bn (\$13bn) Horizon frigate project will be made on Monday at a meeting of the British, French and Italian defence ministers.

Britain has threatened to pull out and build its own ships following disagreements over design and construction. It is understood to insist the industrial arrangements must be more "robust", with the prime contractor able to take decisions on subcontractors and accountable for meeting important targets.

company being sold by GEC to British Aerospace, should be the project's overall prime contractor.

George Robertson, UK defence secretary, Alain Richard of France and Carlo Scognamiglio of Italy are expected to try to push the project forward on Monday at the end of a day-long meeting in Paris of defence procurement chiefs.

Part-time jobs forecast for 30% of workforce

By Robert Taylor, Employment Editor

By 2006, Britain will still have nearly 1.5m unemployed, only 13.7 per cent of its labour force working in manufacturing and nearly 30 per cent of employees in part-time jobs according to an annual survey from Warwick University.

continue into the next century. These are the main findings in the annual review of the economy and employment published today by the independent Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University.

31m by 2006. But the report projects a net loss of more than half a million manufacturing jobs from 1997 to 2006. It also believes the number of workers in construction will drop by 31,000 between 2001 and 2006.

However, the number of jobs for plant and machine workers is expected to remain constant. A large expansion is projected for managers and administrators, professionals, personal services and sales. A growth in self-employment is also expected. By 2006, the category will account for 12 per cent of the labour force compared with 9 per cent in 1981.

will remain severe. This will continue to be concentrated in particular localities and on certain parts of the community like ethnic minorities and older workers.

Hauliers consider moving fleets out of UK

By Charles Batchelor, Transport Correspondent

Two of Britain's largest road haulage groups are considering moving all or parts of their truck fleets to continental Europe to escape the vehicle excise duty rises in the new Budget.

Wincanton Logistics said it was "keeping under constant review the possibility of moving its 4,000-strong vehicle fleet out of the UK", while Tibbett & Britten, which has a similar-sized UK fleet, said it might "flag out" some of its trucks based in the southern English county of Kent.

News that some of the large transport groups are considering registering abroad adds weight to the protests from hauliers' trade associations and smaller companies about the scale of the duty rises.

The duty on a litre of diesel in the UK is 50.2p, compared with 24.57p in France and 19.19p in Belgium. Excise duty on a 40-tonne five-axle truck in the UK is £5,750 (\$9,372) compared with £459 in France and £308 in Luxembourg.

"Many of our vehicles are registered abroad," he told Commercial Motor magazine. "We have several depots in Kent and may flag some of the vehicles out abroad just to show the government the impact of its policies."

NEWS DIGEST

CHALLENGE TO LABOUR PARTY

Blair faces by-election after court verdict on MP

Tony Blair, the prime minister, is facing a fraught by-election in an English Midlands seat after Fiona Jones, the Labour MP for Newark, was found guilty yesterday of filing false election expenses.

CORPORATE SECURITIES

Net investment tops \$13.5bn

Heavy buying by long-term insurance funds fuelled record net investment in UK corporate securities of £8.3bn (\$13.5bn) in the last three months of 1998, the Office of National Statistics said yesterday.

COUNTERFEIT BANK CARDS

Fraud losses rise by 32%

Fraud losses from the use of counterfeit payments cards rose 32 per cent last year to £26.8m (\$43.7m), adding new urgency to banks' plans to replace their cards with high security chip cards.

LIFE ASSURANCE PRODUCTS

Insurance firm suspends sales

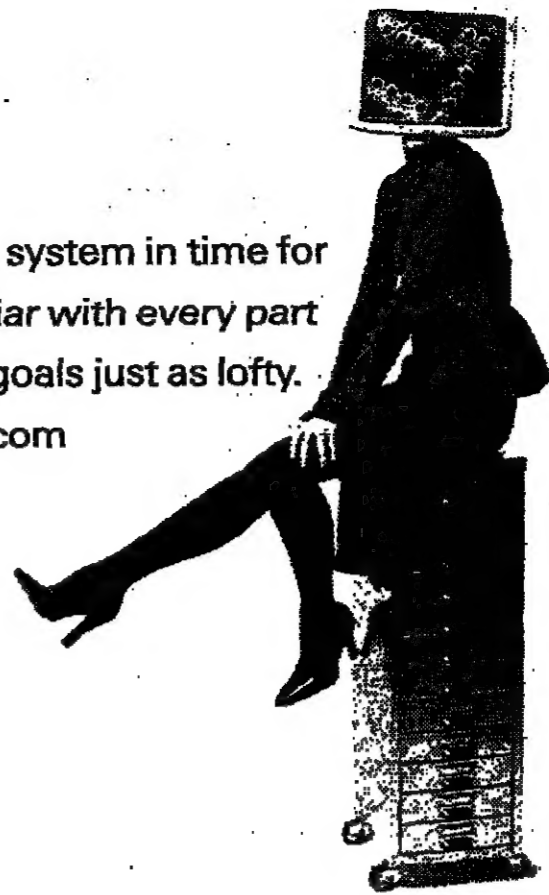
Royal London, a mutual insurance company with 1.2m customers, based in Essex, the county to the east of London, said yesterday it was suspending sales of life assurance and pensions products for at least eight weeks while its staff received additional training.

CONTRACTS & TENDERS BANK OF CRETE S.A. CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN PURCHASING THE TOTAL ASSETS OF ECON INDUSTRIES S.A.

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# Integrating networks. Writing middleware. But before you know it, Monday's here and we have to go back to work.

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Europe

MAN IN THE NEWS ROMANO PRODI

The man who would be Santer

To his supporters abroad, the former Italian prime minister is the ideal next president of the European Commission. James Blitz says Italian attitudes are more cynical



The formidable laugh, the love of food and cigars, the regular appearances cycling around the countryside of Emilia Romagna have all helped to build a personal following...

It is Romano Prodi the man to take Europe into the 21st century. At the end of a tumultuous week in Brussels, the bespectacled former Italian premier has emerged as the man to beat in the race to become the next president of the European Commission.

Conflicting views point to a personality of greater complexity than either his supporters or his critics allow. Mr Prodi is not a career politician. A university professor, he specialised in Italy's small and medium sized industries...

mission president is fraught with difficulty, and that a candidate must get unanimous approval from EU states. Under the right circumstances (which for him mean a five-year posting with the power to approve commissioners) he would love the job.

But in Italy, there is far more cynicism. "He has ability, yes, but has had a lot of luck," says one who knows him well. "In no way is he a hard man, a man of vision, a person who can lead an overhaul of Europe's institutions."

found out that Spain was determined to make the start date, says a one-time ally. "Only on the plane home did he decide he had to do the same."

On economic reform, judgment is also qualified. He sold off Telecom Italia - the "mother of all privatisations". But the sell-off was a blunt exercise in raising cash to bring down Italy's debt.

Just what the patient ordered

The practice of advertising drugs is spreading. David Pilling says it will transform health services in Europe, as it has done in the US

Bob Dole is talking quietly, authoritatively. The problem, he says, takes courage to address. The former US vice-president mentions the difficulty several times, referring to it as "ED".



through "disease awareness campaigns" that "advertised" a disease, without promoting a specific remedy. Conversely, they pushed particular brands without saying what they were for.

advertising increasingly hard to justify: after all, why should information about drugs be available only to internet users? In addition, the net makes it easier for consumers to organise campaigns for particular drugs.

Change of flight plan for corporate travel

Airlines are destroying the traditional business of travel agents, who are having to reinvent themselves, says Michael Skapinker

Is your journey really necessary? This is the question British Aerospace's new travel agents will put to staff before they set off on a sales mission.

"It really has changed," says Brigitte Ringdahl, corporate travel manager at Ericsson, the Swedish telecommunications group. "The travel agents have decided the corporation, rather than the airline, is their closest friend."

BA has this year put its online booking system on to two companies' in-house computer networks, allowing their staff to book tickets directly. It expects up to 80 companies to install its system this year.

Death and the salesmen

Australian television has made history by screening an advertisement for voluntary euthanasia. Gwen Robinson reports on the uproar this has caused

Advertising medicine to the public is controversial enough (see above). But what about advertising euthanasia? That question confronted Australian television viewers this week, when a 90-second clip made advertising history - and, in the eyes of its critics, exceeded all moral and ethical boundaries.

"updates" on her physical deterioration. The commercial's screening coincided with the campaign for state elections in New South Wales, to be held next weekend. Its aim was political: Giles Yates, the society's president, said he hoped that the commercial would prompt a state referendum on the issue of voluntary euthanasia.

life, such ambiguity is dangerous. Cardinal Edward Clancy, said that "any society that tolerates such a commercial... has already succumbed to a culture of death, and is on the edge of despair".



Jane Burns: her televised plea to be allowed to 'die with dignity' has sparked outrage. Reuters

the authority to enforce a ban. "The only other way it could be taken off air is if a legal injunction is taken by a group against the station or the makers" a federation spokesman said.

money... (vertical text on the left margin)

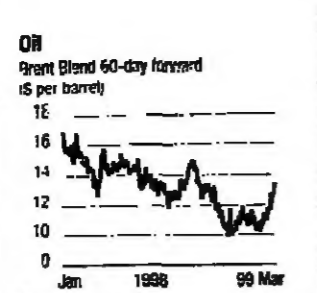
COMMODITIES & AGRICULTURE

Oil futures fall after brief gains

WEEK IN THE MARKETS

By Philip Coggan, Markets Editor

Crude oil consolidated its recent gains yesterday after a week in which the Brent future briefly reached a five-month high...



LME warehouse stocks

Table showing LME warehouse stocks for various metals including Aluminium, Copper, Lead, Nickel, Zinc, Tin, and Silver.

BASE METALS

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

Table showing prices for Aluminium, Zinc, Lead, and Tin at the London Metal Exchange.

Precious Metals continued

Table showing prices for Gold, Silver, and Platinum.

GRAINS AND OIL SEEDS

Table showing prices for Wheat, Corn, Soybeans, and other grains.

SOFTS

Table showing prices for Cocoa, Coffee, and Sugar.

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK

Table showing prices for Live Cattle, Lean Hogs, and Pork Bellies.

ENERGY

Table showing prices for Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Heating Oil.

PRECIOUS METALS

Table showing prices for Gold, Silver, and Platinum.

PULP AND PAPER

Table showing prices for Pulp and Paper.

INDEXES

Table showing various market indices.

WORLD BOND PRICES

Table showing world bond prices for various countries.

WEEKLY PRICE CHANGES

Table showing weekly price changes for various commodities.

PRECIOUS METALS

Table showing prices for Gold, Silver, and Platinum.

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Rate gloom hits European prices

The 10-year gilt future fell 0.15 points to 117.55. Investors will now have to wait for the ECB council meeting on April 8 for a possible rate cut.

US Interest Rates

Table showing US interest rates for various maturities.

UK Indices

Table showing UK stock market indices.

US Treasury Bond Futures

Table showing US Treasury bond futures prices.

Government Bonds

Table showing government bond prices for various countries.

Bond Futures and Options

Table showing bond futures and options prices.

FTSE Actuaries Government Securities

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Large advertisement for FOREX on the net, featuring a stylized globe and the text 'SUCDEN (UK) LIMITED' and 'FOREX on the net'.

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom center of the page.

Yen jumps up

MARKETS REPORT

By Melanie Carroll

Trade was thin in the currency markets yesterday as they finished the week looking towards future developments.

The yen bounced around against the dollar in thin volumes, rising above the key Y117 level several times before closing in London at Y117.125.

Some analysts said a sustained rise above Y117 would herald the possibility of more sharp yen rises to come.

But Dan Almeida, global head of trading at Deutsche Bank, said the market had been quiet heading into a Japanese week.

"People are also waiting to see what happens at the end of the Japanese fiscal year," Mr Almeida said.

The dollar's weakness against the yen could increase if the external position looks untenable, analysts said.

ABN-AMRO, in a research note published yesterday,

said that this week's poor set of US trade data reinforced the "knife edge" of the US stock market, economy and dollar are balanced on.

"Problems with financing the [trade] deficit would leave the dollar vulnerable. If the stock market were to undergo a heavy sustained fall, this would undermine the current behaviour of consumers who no longer seem to save but rely on Dow gains to feed their savings," ABN-AMRO said.

But this need not occur if investors continue to finance the deficit, they added.

The euro had a weak day against the pound, which also rose against the dollar.

THE EURO FELL TO £0.671 AGAINST STERLING AT THE END OF THE LONDON SESSION, BELOW ITS THURSDAY CLOSE.

Paul Webber economist said they expected the continuing weak euro would soon start to bolster European business confidence.

They suggested a softer euro over the past quarter than a stronger one would have been.

"A rising euro would have placed the ECB under extreme pressure to intervene and/or cut rates at a time when both it and the money markets were still feeling their way around a very unfamiliar world," Paul Webber said.

He argued that the euro's movements had more to do with the rising dollar than the euro's perceived weakness.

One trader said the euro's short term position had weakened over the last two days.

"The market was relatively constructive on the euro until Thursday, and now people are selling the euro. A lot of new economic numbers have reiterated that the US is still more robust than Europe," he said.

CURRENCIES & MONEY

EURO SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE EURO

Table with columns: Mar 19, Closing bid, Change, Bid/offer spread, Day's mid, One month, Three months, One year, JP Morgan. Rows include Europe, Americas, Asia, and various currencies like Euro, Pound, Dollar, Yen, etc.

POUND SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE POUND

Table with columns: Mar 19, Closing bid, Change, Bid/offer spread, Day's mid, One month, Three months, One year, JP Morgan. Rows include Europe, Americas, Asia, and various currencies like Euro, Pound, Dollar, Yen, etc.

WORLD INTEREST RATES

Table with columns: MONEY RATES, Mar 19, Over, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer. Rows include Euro-zone, Switzerland, US, Japan, etc.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY RATES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Start, 7 days, One month, Three months, Six months, One year. Rows include Euro, British Pound, Swiss Franc, etc.

THREE MONTH EURO LIBOR FUTURES (MAT/FIN)

Table with columns: Open, Set price, Change, High, Low, Est. vol, Open int. Rows include Jun, Sep, Dec.

THREE MONTH EURO LIBOR FUTURES (LIFE)

Table with columns: Open, Set price, Change, High, Low, Est. vol, Open int. Rows include Jun, Sep, Dec.

THREE MONTH EURO LIBOR FUTURES (LIFE) €1m 100-rate

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CROSS RATES AND DERIVATIVES

EXCHANGE CROSS RATES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer. Rows include Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, etc.

EMS EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNIT RATES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Euro unit, Rate, Change, % change, % spread, Div. Rows include Bremen, Frankfurt, etc.

THREE MONTH EURO LIBOR FUTURES (LIFE) €1m 100-rate

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UK INTEREST RATES

LONDON MONEY RATES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Over, 7 days, One month, Three months, One year. Rows include Sterling, Treasury bills, etc.

THREE MONTH STERLING FUTURES (LIFE) £500,000 points of 100%

Table with columns: Jun, Sep, Dec. Rows include Jun, Sep, Dec.

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OTHER CURRENCIES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer. Rows include Czech, Hungary, etc.

FT GUIDE TO WORLD CURRENCIES

Table with columns: Mar 19, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer, Bid, Offer. Rows include Czech, Hungary, etc.

UK INTEREST RATES

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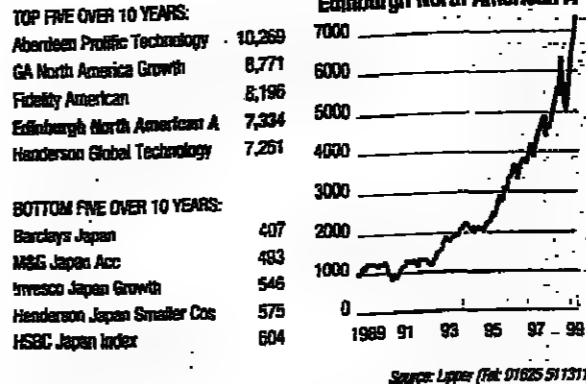
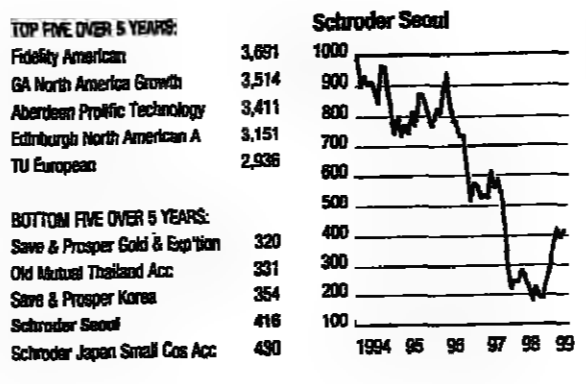
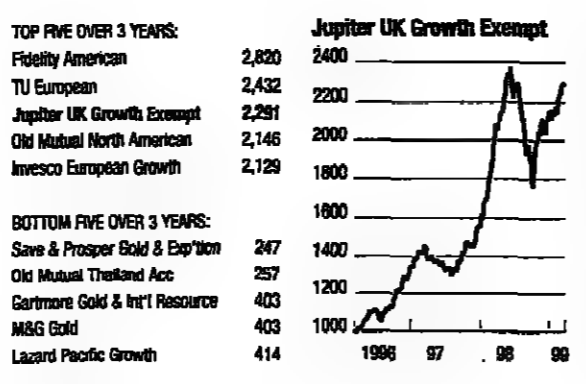
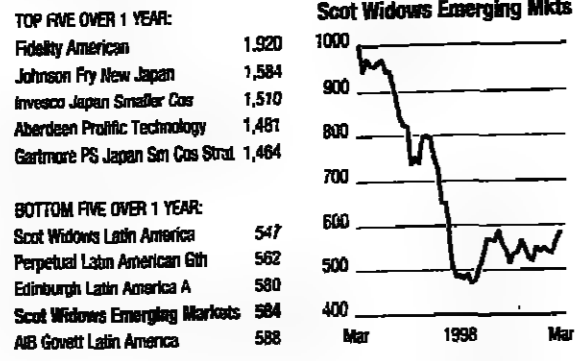
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DATABANK

UNIT TRUSTS

Winners and losers



Tables show the result of investing £1,000 over different time periods. Trusts are ranked on 3-year performance. Warnings: past performance is not a guide to future performance.

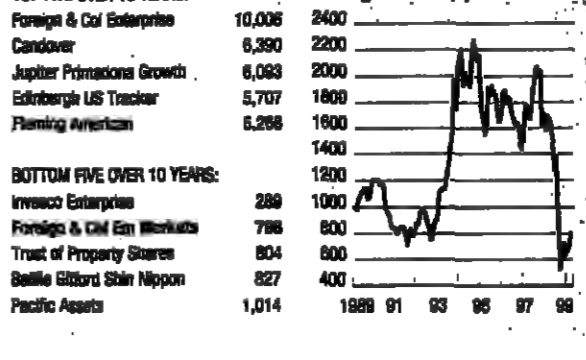
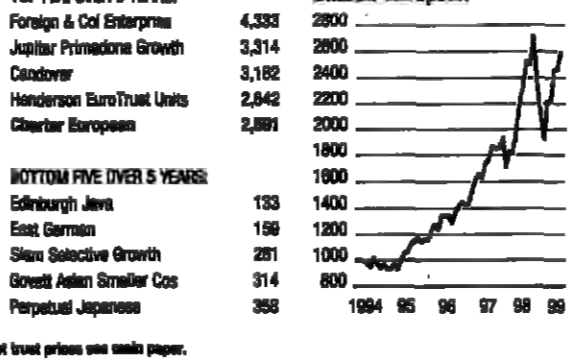
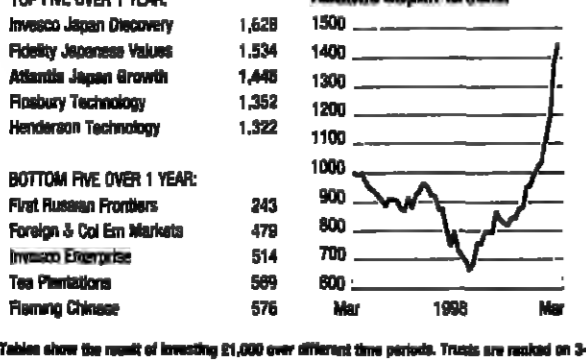
Tables for UK Equities & Bonds, UK Growth, UK Growth & Income, UK Smaller Companies, UK Equity Income, UK Equity & Bond Income, UK Fixed Interest, UK Div, Far East exo Japan, Far East Inc Japan, Japan, and Japan

Tables for Europe, Global Emerging Mkts, International Equity Income, International Fixed Interest, International Equity & Bond, and International Growth

Tables for Best Peps, Property, Nth America, Commodity & Energy, Investment Trust Units, and Fund of Funds

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Winners and losers



Tables show the result of investing £1,000 over different time periods. Trusts are ranked on 3-year performance. Warnings: past performance is not a guide to future performance. For investment trust prices see main paper.

Tables for UK General, UK Inc Gth, Smaller Cos UK, High Income, Venture & Devt Cap, UK General, UK Capital Growth, and UK Smaller Cos Int'l

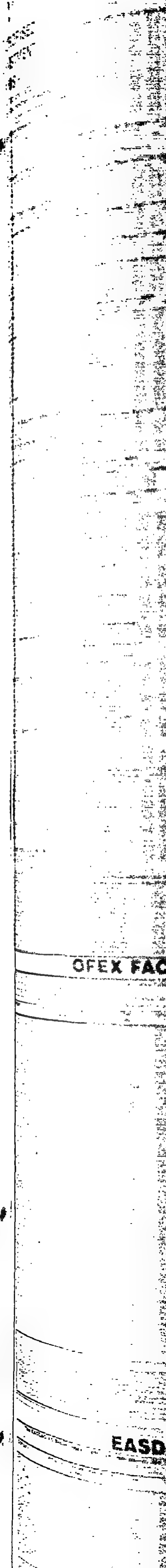
Tables for Japan, Far East Inc Japan, Far East exo Japan, General, Far East exo Japan, Single Country, Emerging Markets, and Closed End Funds

Tables for Property, Split - Capital, Split - Inc & Residual Cap Shares, Split - Income, Split - Zero Dividend, Foreign & Col Eq Markets, and Pacific Assets

GLOSSARY

Performance: Tables like these are full of traps for the unwary. Top 5 don't expect them to tell you which trusts will do best in future... Volatility: Shows the absolute variability of a trust's performance... Yield: Even this has traps for the unwary...

Peps: Some unit and investment trusts can be put into a general personal equity plan which shields investors against income and capital gains tax... Discount: Investment trust shares traditionally sell for less than their underlying asset value... Split capital trusts: Careful, if you do not already know what they are, you would probably be wiser to avoid them...



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FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

FT Cytel Unit Trust Prices are available on the telephone. Call the FT Cytel Help Desk on 0444 773 4276 for more details.

Unit Trusts: Name, Type, Price, % Change, etc.

Unit Trusts: Name, Type, Price, % Change, etc.

Unit Trusts: Name, Type, Price, % Change, etc.

Table of unit trusts including Midland Unit Trust Managers Ltd, Old Mutual Fund Managers Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Sharp (Aberdeen) Ltd, Templeton Investment Managers Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Canadian Life & Accident, Abbey Life Assurance Co Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Midland Unit Trust Managers Ltd, Old Mutual Fund Managers Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Sharp (Aberdeen) Ltd, Templeton Investment Managers Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Canadian Life & Accident, Abbey Life Assurance Co Ltd, and others.

Advertisement for 'the source of market intelligence' featuring the 'mandate' logo and contact information.

Table of unit trusts including Midland Unit Trust Managers Ltd, Old Mutual Fund Managers Ltd, and others.

Table of unit trusts including Sharp (Aberdeen) Ltd, Templeton Investment Managers Ltd, and others.

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Table of unit trusts including Canadian Life & Accident, Abbey Life Assurance Co Ltd, and others.

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Insurances, Money Markets and Other

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Flightline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Centre Help Desk on (044 171) 872 4378 for more details.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Family Friendly Ltd, JP Morgan Life Assurance Limited, and various unit trusts.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like M & G Life and M & G Pensions, National Westminster Life Assurance Ltd, and various unit trusts.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Prudential Individual Pension Funds, Scottish Equitable plc, and various unit trusts.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Standard Life Assurance Co Ltd, Unit Trusts UK Limited, and various unit trusts.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Standard Life Assurance Co Ltd, Unit Trusts UK Limited, and various unit trusts.

Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Standard Life Assurance Co Ltd, Unit Trusts UK Limited, and various unit trusts.

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Table with columns: Name, Price, Change, % Change. Includes entries like Standard Life Assurance Co Ltd, Unit Trusts UK Limited, and various unit trusts.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Money Market Trust Funds

Money Market Bank Accounts

...insensely claiming to be... and human insight, neither of... parade of pleasures by which... bargain to thrill to here and a decade ago.

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

FT Offshore Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Offshore Help Desk on (+44 1773) 873 4376 for more details.

OFFSHORE AND OVERSEAS

BERMUDA (FSA RECOGNISED)

Table listing Bermuda (FSA Recognised) funds including Fidelity Currency Funds Ltd, Jupiter Asset Management (Bermuda) Ltd, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

BERMUDA (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Bermuda (Regulated) funds including Andros Investment Management Ltd, Bermuda Offshore Investment, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

CAYMAN ISLANDS (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Cayman Islands (Regulated) funds including Africh Emerging Markets Fund, Africa Capital Limited, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

Table listing various offshore funds including MFS Meridian Funds - Condit, Marsden Asset Management Limited, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

Table listing various offshore funds including Royal Bank of Canada US FI Mgrs Ltd, Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

Table listing various offshore funds including AIG Asset Management Ltd, Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

Table listing various offshore funds including Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

Table listing various offshore funds including Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, Guinness Global Investors (Guernsey) Ltd, and others with columns for Name, Bid Price, and Ask Price.

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Offshore Funds and Insurances

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

FT Offshore Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Capture Help Desk on (44) 1753 873 4229 for more details.

Main table containing financial data for various offshore funds and insurances, organized by region (Jersey, Luxembourg, etc.) and fund type. Includes columns for fund names, prices, and other financial metrics.

Large vertical advertisement on the left side of the page, partially obscured by a 'Europe' stamp. The text includes 'ATTENTION', 'ISSUES', and 'TECH'.

Handwritten note at the top center: 'Ch 1/10/99'.

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Offshore Insurances and Other Funds

FT Managed Funds Service - Table 1: Lists various fund categories including Old Mutual International - Const., AXA Investment Managers Parle, DWS Deutsche Ges. F. Wertpapier, and GT Global. Each entry includes fund name, ticker, and performance metrics.

FT Managed Funds Service - Table 2: Continuation of fund listings from Table 1, including DWS Deutsche Ges. F. Wertpapier, GT Global, and Indocam Asia. Includes detailed performance data for each fund.

FT Managed Funds Service - Table 3: Continuation of fund listings, including Indocam Asia, Monocam Asset Mgmt, and Schroder Investment Mgmt. Lists fund names, tickers, and performance figures.

FT Managed Funds Service - Table 4: Continuation of fund listings, including Schroder Investment Mgmt, and other international funds. Provides comprehensive data for each fund entry.

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**MANAGED FUNDS NOTES**

These are the most recent notes for the funds listed in this service. They are available on the FT Managed Funds Service website at [www.ftmf.com](http://www.ftmf.com). The notes are subject to change without notice and should be read in conjunction with the fund's prospectus. The most recent notes are available on the FT Managed Funds Service website.

Handwritten note: *JP 11/15/0*

Footsie climbs warily as Dow hits milestone

MARKETS REPORT

By Peter John

The crossing of the magic frontier by the Dow Jones Industrial Average received only an ironic nod from UK investors.

The 10,000 barrier in the US had been talked about exhaustively and even timidly touched earlier in the week.

When it was finally crossed, the US benchmark holding solidly above it throughout the second half of yesterday's UK session, there was merely a plegmatic shrug.

Footsie, the index most affected by international movements,

remained strong. But the closing gain of 48.9 at 6,163.2 yesterday gave no indication that a new paradigm had been discovered.

The FTSE 250 rose 37.7 to 5,501.0 and the SmallCap 12.9 to 2,386.7.

In fact, dealers and investors showed distinctly old world reliance at the breakthrough considering the weight of cash that is to be looking for a home.

"This is a great buying opportunity and we are poised to go a lot, lot higher but everything depends on Wall Street," said David Butler, head of sales at Teather & Greenwood.

Far as the US is concerned, most people believe that every time we get to a magic number

the market draws a breath before it moves to a higher level.

The bull argument for a jolt upward is based on the belief that a huge amount of institutional cash is looking for a way into equities and to maximise returns in a period of low interest rates.

Also, retail buyers, who make up about a fifth of the market, only have two weeks to invest in the last personal equity plan.

Finally, the weight of economic argument - subdued earnings, weak retail sales figures and benign comments from the Bank of England - suggests that base rates can fall further.

On the other hand, the percep-

tion that Wall Street might comfortably jump another 1,500 points if it secures the 10,000 bridgehead are offset by "new paradigm" valuations.

"Market multiples are at their highest for at least 30 years," said Richard Kersey of CSFB. "You can justify that if bond yields are coming down, but our feeling is that yields are on a slightly firmer trend."

UK government bond yields were slightly higher yesterday in line with falling European debt prices.

Nevertheless, much of the potential intensity was diluted by the general Friday malaise and the equine distraction of the Cheltenham festival.

There was also a concentration on purely technical issues. The Footsie was wind-blown in the morning during a double derivatives expiry. Additionally, dealers were watching out for expiry in Germany and a triple witching hour in the US.

From being almost 100 points up in the morning, Footsie drifted gently throughout the afternoon, albeit it on solid turnover.

Recorded volume at 6pm was 1.2bn shares, with the balance tilted towards the Footsie and there was heavy trading in the oil sector. BP Amoco and Shell Transport accounted for 6 per cent of the day's total.

FTSE All-Share index

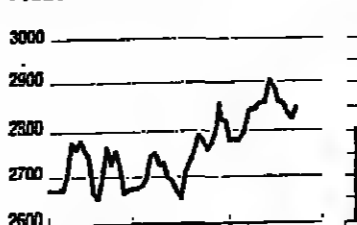


Table with 2 columns: Indices and values. Rows include FTSE 250, FTSE 350, FTSE All-Share, FTSE All-Share Yield, FTSE 100, FTSE Non-Fin p/e, FTSE 100 P/E Mar, 10 yr Gilt yield, Long gilt/Equity yield ratio.

Equity shares traded

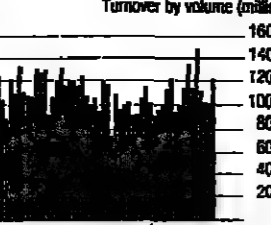


Table with 2 columns: Closing index Mar 19 and Change over week. Rows include Mar 15, Mar 17, Mar 18, Mar 19.

TRADING VOLUME IN MAJOR STOCKS

Table with 3 columns: Stock, Volume, Price change. Lists major stocks like Astra, Biffar, BP, etc.

EQUITY FUTURES AND OPTIONS TRADING

Table with 5 columns: Contract, Price, Change, High, Low. Lists futures and options for FTSE 100, FTSE 250, etc.

Research logs on to Dixons

Research logs on to Dixons. The importance of research on Dixons is highlighted by the reception to research on Dixons.

COMPANIES REPORT

By Martin Brice, Simon Bernhart and Peter Akin. The importance of research on Dixons is highlighted by the reception to research on Dixons.

MAIN MOVERS

Table with 3 columns: Stock, Change, Day's change. Lists main movers like Biffar, Astra, etc.

The rise yesterday was prompted by BICC's announcement...

The rise yesterday was prompted by BICC's announcement, after the market had closed on Thursday, that it had rejected the approach. Predators usually see their share price fall but Wessall was up 2% at 211p.

FT 30 INDEX

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. Lists FT 30 index values for various dates.

FTSE LEADERS & LAGGARDS

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Change. Lists FTSE leaders and laggards.

RISES AND FALLS

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Change. Lists rises and falls in the market.

NEW 52-WEEK-HIGHS-AND-LOWS

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists new 52-week highs and lows.

FTSE Actuaries Share Indices

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. Lists FTSE Actuaries share indices.

Hourly movements

Table with 2 columns: Time, Index. Shows hourly movements of the FTSE All-Share index.

The UK Series

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. Lists various UK economic series.

LIFE EQUITY OPTIONS

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. Lists life equity options.

LONDON RECENT ISSUES: EQUITIES

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists recent issues in the London market.

RIGHTS OFFERS

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists rights offers.

STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists stock market trading data.

FTSE INTERNATIONAL

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists FTSE international indices.

STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists stock market trading data.

STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

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STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

Table with 2 columns: Stock, Price. Lists stock market trading data.

Large advertisement for FTSE International, featuring the FTSE logo and text about international indices and services.

Large advertisement on the left side of the page, featuring the word 'Europe' and 'no. 1 in the world'.

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Table listing companies in the Alcoholic Beverages sector, including names like Diageo, Heineken, and Carlsberg, with their respective share prices.

BANKS, RETAIL

Table listing companies in the Banks and Retail sectors, including names like HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland, and Marks & Spencer.

SMOKERIES, PUBS & REST

Table listing companies in the Smokeries, Pubs & Restaurants sectors, including names like British American Tobacco and Wm. Morrison Supercentres.

BUILDING MATS. & MERCHANTS

Table listing companies in the Building Materials and Merchants sectors, including names like Bunnings and Wickes.

CHEMICALS

Table listing companies in the Chemicals sector, including names like ICI and Akzo.

CONSTRUCTION

Table listing companies in the Construction sector, including names like Bovis Lend Lease and Bovis Lend Lease Construction.

CONSTRUCTION - Continued

Continuation of the Construction sector table.

DISTRIBUTORS

Table listing companies in the Distributors sector, including names like Asda and Sainsbury's.

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

Table listing companies in the Diversified Industrials sector, including names like Unilever and Nestle.

ELECTRICITY

Table listing companies in the Electricity sector, including names like British Energy and EDF Energy.

ELECTRONIC & ELECTRICAL EQPT

Table listing companies in the Electronic & Electrical Equipment sectors, including names like Philips and Bosch.

ENGINEERING

Table listing companies in the Engineering sector, including names like BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce.

ENGINEERING - Continued

Continuation of the Engineering sector table.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Table listing companies in the Extractive Industries sector, including names like Anglo American and Anglo Coal.

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Table listing companies in the Engineering and Vehicles sectors, including names like Jaguar and Land Rover.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Continuation of the Extractive Industries sector table.

FOOD PRODUCERS

Table listing companies in the Food Producers sector, including names like Unilever and Nestle.

FOOD PRODUCERS - Continued

Continuation of the Food Producers sector table.

GAS DISTRIBUTION

Table listing companies in the Gas Distribution sector, including names like British Gas and Suez.

HEALTH CARE

Table listing companies in the Health Care sector, including names like GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca.

HEALTH CARE - Continued

Continuation of the Health Care sector table.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT

Table listing companies in the Household Goods and Textiles sectors, including names like Next and Primark.

INSURANCE

Table listing companies in the Insurance sector, including names like Aviva and Allianz.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing companies in the Investment Trusts sector, including names like Fidelity and Schroders.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS - Continued

Continuation of the Investment Trusts sector table.

INV TRUSTS SPLIT CAPITAL

Table listing companies in the Investment Trusts Split Capital sub-sector, including names like Fidelity and Schroders.

Advertisement for Henderson & AMP Investors. Text: 'This moment of tranquility was brought to you by those thoughtful people in Asset Management.' Includes Henderson & AMP logo.

Handwritten note: '150' with a scribble.

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

OTHER INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing various investment trusts with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Table listing investment companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

LEISURE & HOTELS

Table listing leisure and hotel companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

LIFE ASSURANCE

Table listing life assurance companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

MEDIA

Table listing media companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

MEDIA - Continued

Table listing media companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

OIL EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Table listing oil exploration and production companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

OIL, INTEGRATED

Table listing integrated oil companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

OTHER FINANCIAL

Table listing other financial companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

PAPER, PACKAGING & PRINTING

Table listing paper, packaging, and printing companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Table listing pharmaceutical companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

PROPERTY - Continued

Table listing property companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

RETAILERS, FOOD

Table listing food retailers with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Table listing general retailers with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Table listing general retailers (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Table listing telecommunications companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

TOBACCO

Table listing tobacco companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

TRANSPORT

Table listing transport companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing support services companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

TRADING INDEX SECURITIES

Table listing trading index securities with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AMERICANS

Table listing American companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

CANADIANS

Table listing Canadian companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

SOUTH AFRICANS

Table listing South African companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AIM

Table listing Alternative Investment Market (AIM) companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

TRANSPORT - Continued

Table listing transport companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

WATER

Table listing water companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AMERICANS

Table listing American companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

CANADIANS

Table listing Canadian companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

SOUTH AFRICANS

Table listing South African companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AIM

Table listing AIM companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AIM - Continued

Table listing AIM companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

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AIM - Continued

Table listing AIM companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

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Table listing AIM companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

AIM

Table listing AIM companies (continued) with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

Advertisement for Charles Schwab featuring a '06' logo and text: 'You only have until next Friday to apply for your 1998/99 Charles Schwab PER. Call 0670 601 8888 for an application pack, quoting Ref. No. FT482. Charles Schwab Helping Investors Help Themselves. www.schwab-worldwide.com/europe'

GUIDE TO LONDON SHARE SERVICE

Prices and trading volumes for the London Share Service are delivered by... This information is based on data used for the FTSE 100... Prices are shown in pence unless otherwise stated... Volume is shown in thousands unless otherwise stated... % Change is shown in pence unless otherwise stated... The FT Free Annual Reports Club... FT Cityline... The FT web site...

are. and we



Tech stocks hesitate as Dow climbs

Highs & Lows shown on a 52 week basis

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES (Mar 19 / US\$)

Table of US stock market data including S&P 500, Dow Jones, and various sector indices with columns for High, Low, and Change.

CANADA (Mar 19 / Can \$)

Table of Canadian stock market data including TSX 300 and various sector indices.

MEXICO (Mar 19 / Mex \$)

Table of Mexican stock market data including IPC and various sector indices.

BRAZIL (Mar 19 / Real)

Table of Brazilian stock market data including Ibovespa and various sector indices.

ARGENTINA (Mar 19 / Pesos)

Table of Argentine stock market data including Merval and various sector indices.

CHILE (Mar 19 / Chilean \$)

Table of Chilean stock market data including IPSA and various sector indices.

PERU (Mar 19 / Nuevos Soles)

Table of Peruvian stock market data including IGV and various sector indices.

VENEZUELA (Mar 19 / Bolivars)

Table of Venezuelan stock market data including IVBOP and various sector indices.

COLOMBIA (Mar 19 / Colombian \$)

Table of Colombian stock market data including IBEX and various sector indices.

ECUADOR (Mar 19 / US Dollars)

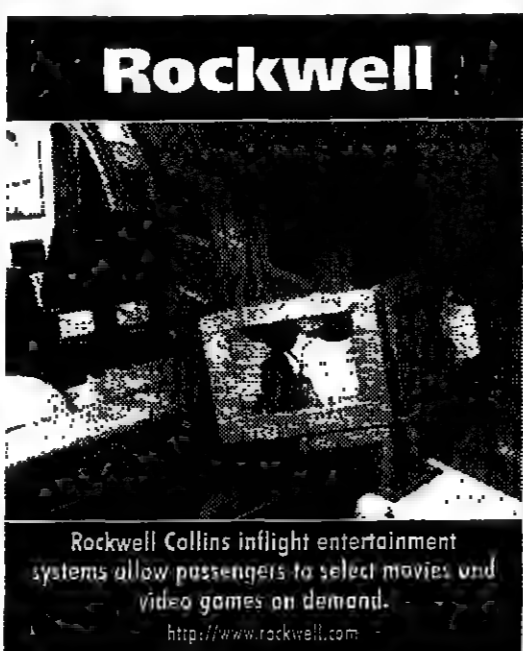
Table of Ecuadorian stock market data including ISE and various sector indices.

PANAMA (Mar 19 / Colon)

Table of Panamanian stock market data including ISE and various sector indices.

CUBA (Mar 19 / Cuban \$)

Table of Cuban stock market data including ISE and various sector indices.



Rockwell Collins inflight entertainment systems allow passengers to select movies and video games on demand. http://www.rockwell.com

EUROPE (NON-EMU)

Table of European stock market data for non-EMU countries including UK, France, Germany, and others.

EUROPE (EMU) Prices in €

Table of European stock market data for EMU countries including Spain, Italy, Greece, and others.

AFRICA

Table of African stock market data including South Africa, Egypt, and others.

PACIFIC

Table of Pacific stock market data including Japan, Australia, and others.

ASIA

Table of Asian stock market data including India, Singapore, and others.

INDICES

Table of various global stock indices including S&P 500, Dow Jones, Nikkei, and others.

US INDICES

Table of US stock market indices including S&P 500, Dow Jones, and various sector indices.

EUROPE (EMU) Prices in €

Table of European stock market data for EMU countries including Spain, Italy, Greece, and others.

AFRICA

Table of African stock market data including South Africa, Egypt, and others.

PACIFIC

Table of Pacific stock market data including Japan, Australia, and others.

ASIA

Table of Asian stock market data including India, Singapore, and others.







COMPANIES & FINANCE

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION BERLUSCONI GROUP AND PRINCE AL WALEED TO TAKE 3.2% STAKES IN VENTURE

Kirch at centre of new TV alliance

By Paul Butler in Milan

A European commercial television alliance and financial partnership was sealed last night between the Italian television group of Silvio Berlusconi...

stakes in the Berlusconi commercial TV business. Mediaset and Kirch also agreed last night to set up a European television joint venture called Eureka...

Travista". Rupert Murdoch, the media magnate, had originally considered joining the new partnership around the Kirch group...

Nike seeks a footpath back to growth as sales go flat

Sportswear group fights industry slump, writes Victoria Griffith

All companies like to win, but at Nike beating the competition is almost a religion. Now that the US sportswear group has left its former arch-rival Reebok trailing...



Taiwan workers glue soles to shoes for the company Pou Chen, which includes Nike among its clients

\$500m this year and \$1bn within the next few years. Europe is a prime focus of growth and the company is confident it will be able to boost sales there by 20 per cent in the next five years...

Nike has also renewed its commitment to design and retailers say the company's autumn line is its best-looking in years. 'We'd gotten stale on design in the last couple years,' says Mr Clarke...

Ousted BMW director to head Ford division

By John Griffiths in London and Uta Harnischfeger in Frankfurt

Wolfgang Reitzle, the former BMW board member ousted by the German car company last month, is to take up one of the motor industry's most challenging new jobs. He will take control of Ford's four luxury car brands - Jaguar, Lincoln, Volvo and Aston - combined within a new division, Premier Automotive Group...



Nick Scheele: 'I came in as an unknown from Mexico'

50, a 33-year veteran of the Munich company, had overseen BMW's product development and had been considered the obvious successor as chairman to Bernd Pischetsrieder...

Chapman soon to quit Nomura

By Gillian Tett in Tokyo and Clay Harris in London

Max Chapman, the only non-Japanese director of Nomura Securities, Japan's largest securities house, is to retire when his contract expires at the end of this month. The broker did not explain why Mr Chapman, 55, was leaving after more than 10 years...

first half of the year to March 31, it lost ¥207bn (\$2.76bn), because of losses in Russia and US property. These have sparked an internal debate about Nomura's overseas strategy and weakened Mr Ujii's position...

FTSE & ACTUARIES WORLD INDICES table showing various market indices and their performance metrics.

Brazilian Finance & Investment advertisement for Financial Times Surveys, including contact information for Janeth Harvey.

Appointments Advertising advertisement for Financial Times, featuring contact details for Chris Ibbiston.

Businesses for Sale and Business Services advertisements, including Motor Dealerships, Internet & Multi-Media, and Cable & Wireless Business Mobile.

Business Software advertisements including Convertible Bonds, Central Software, Universal Add-Ins, Investor Ease, Process Mapping & Modelling, Technical Analysis Software, and Easyrisk.

UniCredito poised for BCI merger offer

By Paul Betts in Milan
The wave of mergers in Europe's banking sector looked set to continue last night with UniCredito Italiano, Italy's largest bank in terms of market capitalisation, poised to make a merger offer to Banca Commerciale Italiana, its Milan rival.

recently indicated that they considered their bank needed to grow further. The decision to move to the next stage of expansion appears to have been accelerated by recent banking mergers in Spain and France.

following BCI's board decision on Thursday to free the Milan bank from an earlier obligation to negotiate a merger exclusively with Banca di Roma.

Motorola promises to keep Iridium on line

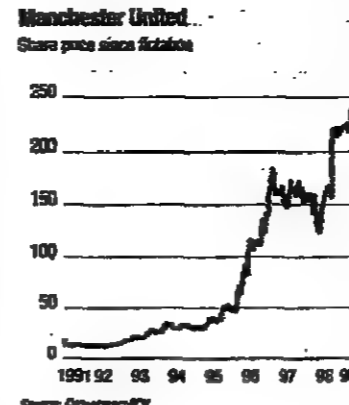
By Christopher Price in Hannover

Motorola has pledged financial support for Iridium as the troubled hand-held satellite phone group prepares to meet its bankers to discuss the impending breach of its banking covenants.

THE LEX COLUMN

Gunning for Gucci

Gucci is an Italian company, listed in Amsterdam, which the French think should belong to them. Now the Asian crisis seems over, fashion stocks have regained their glamour.



BSkyB offer. Man Utd has put itself up for sale, meaning that some bid premium would stay in the shares.

Even so, since the bid was launched a lot has gone Man Utd's way on the pitch, notably in the European Champions League, which will boost this year's turnover to near the £100m mark.

UK joins protest over Czech brewing merger

By Robert Anderson in Prague

The UK yesterday stepped into the row over a Czech beer merger involving the brewer of the world famous Pilsner Urquell lager.

a large brewing presence of its own by acquiring Radegast. The Czech Republic is Bass's only significant brewing interest outside the UK and it has yet to see a profit since launching in the country in 1994.

But, under a new chairman, the office this year secretly reopened the case and in effect overturned those judgments by saying it had no power to intervene.

Mr Arnauld had failed in wooing these two. He also exploited lax regulation in Amsterdam that allows swathes of shares to be issued without specific recourse to shareholders.

Will they continue to pooh-pooh the possibility of gaining synergies between distinctive brands if they go on the acquisition trail?

trading on a typical discount to net assets of 15-20 per cent. The fear is that an independent Electra would fall to a similar discount - or worse because of the \$540m debt it would take on in buying back 40 per cent of its equity.

Manchester United's shares have suffered from reports that the UK Monopolies and Mergers Commission is set to block British Sky Broadcasting's takeover of the soccer club.

British Telecoms

Prising open the Japanese telecommunications markets has been a painfully slow process. But BT appears to be pursuing a sensible mix'n'match approach.

Companies in this issue

Table listing various companies and their stock prices, including Electra Investment, ABB Amro, AT&T, Ford, Adidas, and others.

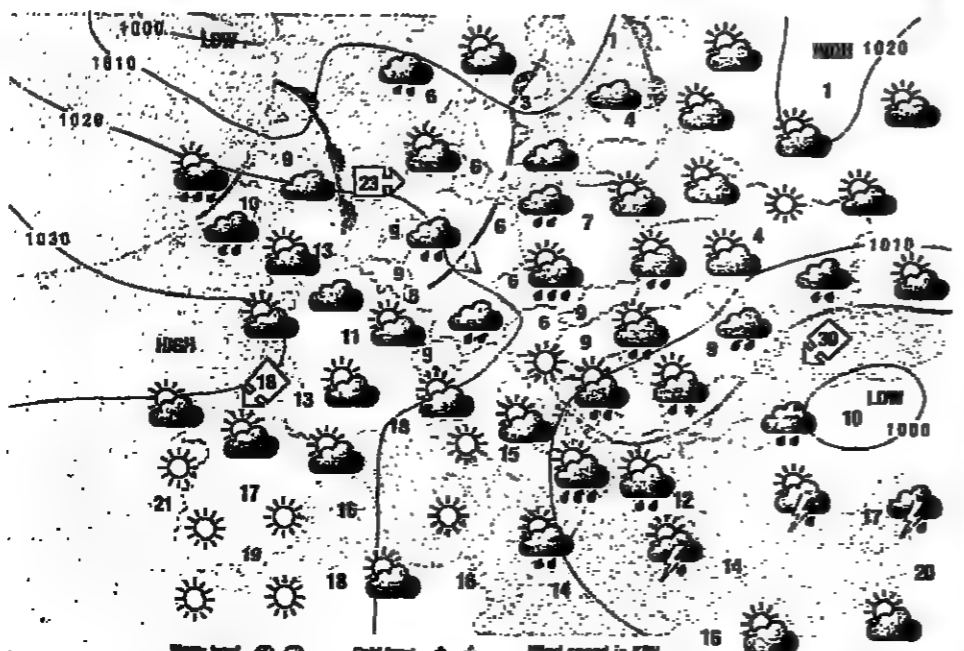
Markets Latest

Table showing market indices and rates, including FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE All-Share, Nikkei, Dow Jones, and various bond and oil prices.

Europe today

Northern regions will be cloudy and cool with rain but central and eastern Europe should see some sun among the showers.

Five-day forecast
Heavy, thundery showers in the eastern Mediterranean will clear for a while. Heavy downpours in central regions will spread eastwards in midweek.



TODAY'S TEMPERATURES

Table listing current temperatures for various cities worldwide, including London, New York, Tokyo, and Sydney.

Panasonic GD70 advertisement featuring a mobile phone image and text: 'Because sometimes you can't have your hands free. When you're tied up, you can't always reach the phone. That's why the GD70 is completely hands-free.'



Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom center of the page.

# FT

## WEEKEND

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The 'real' face of justice stands up  
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**Shakespeare talks**  
What's so good about verse-speak?  
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**On the prowl!**  
Game tracking in the Serengeti  
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# Old father time becomes a terror

We are all, we say, stressed out: there is ever more to do, and fewer hours to do it in. Richard Tomkins examines a mounting modern dilemma

It's barely 6.30am and already your stress levels are rising. You're late for a breakfast meeting. Your cell-phone is ringing and your pager is beeping. You have 36 messages in your e-mail, 10 calls on your Voicemail and one question on your mind.

Why was it never like this for Dick Van Dyke? Somehow, life seemed much simpler in the 1960s. In *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, the classic American sitcom of the era, Rob Petrie's job as a television scriptwriter was strictly nine-to-five. It was light when he left for work and light when he got home. There was no teleconferencing during his journey from the Westchester suburbs to the TV studio in Manhattan.

At work, deadlines loomed, but there was plenty of time for banter around the office typewriter. There was no Internet, no Voicemail, no fax machine, no CNN. The nearest Patrie came to information overload was listening to a stream of wisecracks from his colleague Buddy Sorrell about Mel, the bald producer.

Meanwhile, at home, Rob's wife Laura - Mary Tyler Moore - led a life of leisure. After packing little Richie off to school, she had little to do but gossip with Millie, the next-door neighbour, and prepare the evening meal. When Rob came home, the family sat down to dinner; then it was television, and off to bed.

Today, this kind of life seems almost unimaginable. The demands on our time seem to grow ever heavier. Technology has made work portable, allowing it to merge with our personal lives. The nine-to-five job is extinct: in

the US, people now talk about the 24-7 job, meaning one that requires your commitment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Home life has changed, too. Laura and Millie no longer have time for a gossip: they are vice-presidents at a bank. Richie's after-school hours are spent at karate classes and Chinese lessons. The only person at home any more is Buddy, who went freelance six months ago after being de-layered by Mel.

New phrases have entered the language to express the sense that we are losing control of our lives. "Time famine" describes the mismatch between things to do and hours to do them in, and "multi-tasking" the attempt to reconcile the two. If multi-tasking works, we achieve "time deepening", making better use of the time available; but usually it proves inadequate, resulting in "hurry sickness" and an increasingly desperate search for "life balance" as the sufferer moves closer to breakdown.

It was not supposed to be this way. Technology, we thought, would make our lives easier. Machines were expected to do our work for us, leaving us with ever-increasing quantities of time to fritter away on idleness and pleasure.

But instead of liberating us, technology has enslaved us. Innovations are occurring at a bewildering rate: as many now arrive in a year as once arrived in a millennial.



Ferguson

um. And as each invention arrives, it eats further into our time.

The motor car, for example, promised unimaginable levels of personal mobility. But now, traffic in cities moves more slowly than it did in the days of the horse-drawn carriage, and we waste our lives immobilised by congestion.

The aircraft promised new horizons, too. The trouble is, it delivered them. Its very existence created a demand for time-consuming journeys that we would never previously have dreamed of undertaking - the transatlantic shopping expedition, for example, or the trip to a convention on the other side of the world.

In most cases, technology has not saved time, but enabled us to do more things. In the home, washing machines promised to free women from the drudgery of the laundry. In reality, they encouraged us to change our clothes daily instead of weekly, creating seven times as much washing and ironing. Similarly, the weekly bath has been replaced by the daily shower, multiplying the hours spent on personal grooming.

Meanwhile, technology has not only allowed work to spread into our leisure time - the laptop-on-the-beach syndrome - but added the new burden of dealing with faxes, e-mails and Voicemails. It has also provided us with the opportunity to spend hours

fixing software glitches on our personal computers or filling our heads with useless information from the Internet.

Technology apart, the Internet points the way to a second reason why we feel so time-pressed: the information explosion.

A couple of centuries ago, nearly all the world's accumulated learning could be contained in the heads of a few philosophers. Today, those heads could not hope to accommodate more than a tiny fraction of the information generated in a single day. News, facts and opinions

amounts to a minute proportion of the expanding frontiers of scholarship.

There is another reason for our increased stress levels, too: rising prosperity. As ever-larger quantities of goods and services are produced, they have to be consumed. Driven on by advertising, we do our best to oblige: we buy more, travel more and play more, but we struggle to keep up. So we suffer from what Wilson calls discontent with super abundance - the confusion of endless choice.

Of course, not everyone is

overstressed. "It's a convenient shorthand to say we're all time-starved, but we have to remember that it only applies to, say, half the population," says Michael Willmott, director of the Future Foundation, a London research company.

"You've got people retiring early, you've got the unemployed, you've got other people maybe only peripherally involved in the economy who don't have this situation at all. If you're unemployed, your problem is that you've got too much time, not too little."

And on-line retailers are seeing big increases in sales - though not, as yet, profits. A third reaction to time famine has been the growth of the work-life debate. You hear more about people taking early retirement or giving up high pressure jobs in favour of occupations with shorter working hours. And bodies such as Britain's National Work-Life Forum have sprung up, urging employers to end the long-hours culture among managers - "presenteeism" - and to adopt family-friendly working policies.

The trouble with all these reactions is that liberating time - whether by making better use of it, buying it from others or reducing the amount spent at work - is futile if the hours gained are immediately diverted to other purposes.

As Godbey points out, the stress we feel arises not from a shortage of time, but from the surfeit of things we try to

Centre's Edwards. "If you take your kids to a movie and McDonald's and it's not perfect, you've wasted an afternoon, and it's a sense that you've lost something precious. If you lose some money you can earn some more, but if you waste time you can never get it back."

People are also trying to buy time. Anything that helps streamline our lives is a growth market. One example is what Americans call concierge services - domestic help, child care, gardening and decorating.

It's almost got to the point where there's stress envy. If you're not stressed, you're not succeeding. Everyone wants to have a little bit of this stress to show they're an important person.

There is another aspect to all of this issue, too. Hour-by-hour logs kept by thousands of volunteers over the decades have shown that, in the UK, working hours have risen only slightly in the last 10 years, and in the US, they have actually fallen - even for those in professional and executive jobs, where the perceptions of stress are highest.

In the US, John Robinson, professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, and Geoffrey Godbey, professor of leisure studies at Penn State University, both time-use experts, found that, since the mid-1960s, the average American had gained five hours a week in free time - that is, time left after working, sleeping, commuting, caring for children and doing the chores.

The gains, however, were unevenly distributed. The people who benefited the most were singles and empty-nesters. Those who gained the least - less than an hour - were working couples with pre-school children, perhaps reflecting the trend for parents to spend more time nurturing their offspring.

There is, of course, a gender issue here, too. Advances in household appliances may have encouraged women to take paying jobs; but as we have already noted, technology did not end household chores. As a result, we see appalling inequalities in the distribution of free time between the sexes. According to the Henley Centre, working fathers in the UK average 48 hours of free time a week. Working mothers get 14.

Inequalities apart, the perception of time famine is widespread, and has provoked a variety of reactions. One is an attempt to gain the largest possible amount of satisfaction from the smallest possible investment of time. People today want fast food, sound bites and instant gratification. And they become upset when time is wasted.

"People talk about quality time. They want perfect moments," says the Henley

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The trouble with all these reactions is that liberating time - whether by making better use of it, buying it from others or reducing the amount spent at work - is futile if the hours gained are immediately diverted to other purposes.

As Godbey points out, the stress we feel arises not from a shortage of time, but from the surfeit of things we try to

crum into it. "It's the kid in the candy store," he says. "There's just so many good things to do. The array of choices is stunning. Our free time is increasing, but not as fast as our sense of the necessity."

A more successful remedy may lie in understanding the problem rather than evading it. Before the industrial revolution, people lived in small communities with limited communications. Within the confines of their village, they could reasonably expect to know everything that was to be known, see everything that was to be seen, and do everything that was to be done.

Today, being curious by nature, we are still trying to do the same. But the global village is a world of limitless possibilities, and we can never achieve our aim.

It is not more time we need: it is fewer desires. We need to switch off the cell-phone and leave the children to play by themselves. We need to buy less, read less and travel less. We need to set boundaries for ourselves, or be doomed to mounting despair.

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PERSPECTIVES

LUNCH WITH THE FT

Is this the real face of justice?

Geoffrey Robertson, crusader for human rights and husband of over-the-top writer Kathy Lette, tries to help Lucy Kellaway get to grips with the law

At one table a pale youth sat hunched over a packet of crisps. At another, a pair of badly dressed men were having an argument in sign language. Presently a grander specimen of humanity swept in. Tall and imposing, with a loud pinstriped suit and even louder voice, here was my lunch date, the defence barrister Geoffrey Robertson.

you do not go to a Lawrence re-enactment at the Tricycle Theatre, but to *Measure for Measure* at the Barbican. Shakespeare said it all. Take Constable Elbow, he's so thick he cannot get a warrant to arrest a pimp. "You have to be pretty stupid to end up in prison," he went on. He launched into an anecdote about how his "beat-up BMW" got nicked the other day from outside his house, how he phoned the police with evidence that should have allowed them to make an immediate arrest, but their petty rules prevented them from following it up.

"Law enforcement in other countries is really producing the convictions. Our real problem is the Luddites, the chief constables who do not want national organisations interfering with their patch." Geoffrey Robertson is full of ideas. Many of them may be excellent. After all, he tends to be on the side of the angels. He campaigned for human rights decades before it became fashionable. He has acted for Michael X, Salman Rushdie, Vaclav Havel, against governments of the day, Mary Whitehouse, Hastings Banda. In no particular order, he told me how worthless was the Press

'I find writing amusing. I've never found the law fun. It's very hard work. I always say to people if you want to enjoy life become a journalist'

would be able to talk. But as we sat down on the canteen's plastic bench, I realised the precaution was unnecessary: Robertson seemed to have no trouble talking anywhere. In the first five minutes, he had told me how barristers' robing rooms should be turned into coffee shops. How courts should have crèches. How awful it was that the new international criminal court is in a shopping centre in the Hague. How 20 years ago, when he started at the Old Bailey with the Oz obscenity trial, lying was endemic in the system. Have things got better, I asked, squeezing in a question at last. "I don't know if you've had time to dip into my book," he said, looking slightly irritated. "I wrote *The Justice Game* to explain how things have improved. I wanted to isolate some of the strengths of justice."

Complaints Commission, how spineless were the bosses of the TV networks, how ludicrous the libel laws (a law for the rich) and how there should be a privacy law. It was all very well. Yet I was not finding my lunch companion as stimulating as I should have been. The more he forced me, the more debilitated I felt. Suddenly he leapt from the table. The time had come for our second lunch. He went to collect his black coat and cream cashmere scarf and out we went to find a taxi. As we sat through the lunchtime traffic, he delivered a lecture on libel in Malaysia. Possibly sensing that my response was unsatisfactory, he broke into small talk, and we discussed the relative amounts of dog mess on the pavements in Islington (where he used to live) and Swiss Cottage where he now lives. It almost amounted to a conversation. Eventually we arrived at The Ivy. He was welcomed as an old



Geoffrey Robertson: 'There isn't much accountability among lawyers and the more we start talking about ourselves the better'

element of vanity involved? "No, there wasn't. I enjoy writing. I am married to a writer." I asked if they sat side by side writing their different books. Him: *Crimes Against Humanity*. Her: *Girls Night In, Fatal Attraction*. He said they didn't. But what I really wanted to know was what went on between this odd pair. Does he lecture her

about human rights while she replies with her trademark one liners about sex? Instead, I asked if he might ever write crime fiction. "One should do a novel. I get irritated by Inspector Morse and P.D. James - inspectors are not great philosophers, in reality they are dull bores." I said dull bores do not make

good books; he corrected me. "Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* was a dull bore," he said. "I find writing amusing," he went on, "but I've never found the law fun. The law is not there for anyone's enjoyment. It's very hard work. I always say to people if you want to enjoy life become a journalist."

That day neither journalist nor barrister seemed to be working all that hard: it was half past four by the time we got our coats and went out into the cold afternoon in search of a cab. He asked me if I could drop him off at his Doughty Street chambers, but then had second thoughts, diving in to the nearest shop announcing he had to buy something for one of his children.



ETHICS TODAY JOE ROGALY

Touched by more than the sun

India might prosper with less freedom - but few are ready to abandon democracy

We have had another touch of the sun. For the past fortnight we have been sitting on a porch in Santiniketan, a university town about 150km north of Calcutta. Not all day, of course, but at dawn and in the evening. The rest of the time it is too hot and we flee indoors, to the ubiquitous fan or the rare air-conditioner. The Monica book and interviews passed us by, save for brief mentions in the Calcutta papers. That kind of thing never arose in discussions here. Santiniketan has been home to two Nobel prize-winners: Rabindranath Tagore, for poetry in 1913, and Amartya Sen, for economics last year. Its educated elite shows deep respect for learning, scant regard for the clamour of the west. Tagore founded the university, whose Bengali name means India and the world. He also established a village development school at nearby Sriniketan. Late in life he told of his early years as manager of his father's estate. He built a road, and said to the villagers alongside that the responsibility for the upkeep was theirs. "They replied: 'Very fine! We are to repair the road and then the *babus* can go and come in comfort. It is very difficult to help such people.'"

promotion of self-help in villages. He was the argumentative friend of Gandhi, urging him to proceed with caution, and an important influence on Nehru. His early schools were *ashrams*, the pupils in a ring beneath a banyan tree. You can see their like in Santiniketan today. Music, painting and sculpture feature strongly in this all-ages open-air academy. Amartya Sen, now master of Trinity College, Cambridge, was greeted by adoring crowds when he came here in December. He takes care to avoid the trap of giving his fellow countrymen gratuitous advice on economic policy, but in an interview published in India he welcomed the post-1991 liberalisation and regretted the neglect by successive governments of education, land reform, health care and social security. Sitting on our balcony I ruminated on the best forms of social spending in a market economy. There is a small lake, a pond really, upon which the fierce sun glares. Mud-walled houses line the far side of it. The people rise at dawn, perform their toilet squatting by the water's edge, wash themselves and their clothes. Small boys cast nets for fish. Cows, independent dogs, the freest-range chickens on earth, black hairy pigs, ducks, goats, roam around foraging in the dust. Most Indians live in villages. Not all of these are poor; it depends on local circumstance. But 400m of the

billion population are classified as living in poverty. In some villages, we were told, tuberculosis is rife. "I cannot take responsibility for the whole of India," said Tagore. "I wish to win only one or two small villages." His words are well known to the intelligentsia who live around us. We discuss the whole of India, and the world, with some of them. One of our topics is how to govern such a huge country, such diverse people? Would less freedom have facilitated

A colleague, of a similar political persuasion, gently demurred. India's democratic parties play rough, especially when in power, but in the end the rules prevail. That said, many Indians believe that populist politics is an obstacle to growth. The unravelling of the "permit Raj" was first announced in 1991. An intricate web of licences, subsidies, regulation and state intervention is still discernible. A fresh impetus has been given to

wealthier states to the north and west of here, but we detected a determination to maintain an Indian distinctiveness in all things. This is consonant with what I understood of Tagore's teachings: be open to the world, but not absorbed by it. We European visitors can sympathise with this. Some British politicians seem to dream of taking the UK into the US, but most Europeans would not follow. Indian life, for all the privations endured by many, has a distinct charm of its own. The ambience is quite unlike that of the Atlantic world. This is not to say that Indians are above materialism. You have only to turn on the TV to recognise the universal appeal to middle-class aspirations. The relatively well-off fifth of the population constitutes a huge potential market for mobile phones, cars, financial services and all the rest of the well-known package of capitalist goodies. It is also true that wealthy Indian families who might once have sought places in British universities for their sons and daughters now look first to Harvard, M.I.T., Berkeley. Some such high-flyers become employable on the global marketplace. One of the most eminent is Amartya Sen. A graduate of Calcutta and Cambridge, he was a Harvard professor before he moved to his present job. But then he regularly comes home to Santiniketan for a touch of the sun, perhaps.

We detected a determination to maintain an Indian distinctiveness in all things: be open to the world, but not absorbed by it

the creation of more wealth, reduced inequality? This is awkward. India's greatest triumph is its devoted adherence to the principles of democracy. It is a wonderful achievement, but China, devoid of such niceties, has spread literacy and basic health care to a greater proportion of its people. It is China that first and most effectively exploited the capitalist whirlwind, India that is an often reluctant liberaliser, China that attracts the most inward investment. No contest. Among the Indian elite relatively few would abolish democracy. A visitor to our porch argued that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not a systemic failure but the fault of Khrushchev and Gorbachev.

limited privatisation, but the larger part of Nehru's mixed economy remains in place. Take one recent example. The telecom regulatory authority announced a new price structure, increasing local call charges and cutting back long-distance prices. We outsiders cannot say whether it made the right decision. That is beside the point. The opposition parties made a fuss and the government hesitated. This sort of thing happens in all democratic countries, but in India, where the need for modernisation is demonstrably overwhelming, it seems to happen too often. We also talked, as the morning sun became unbearable, of globalisation of the world economy. The view may be different in the

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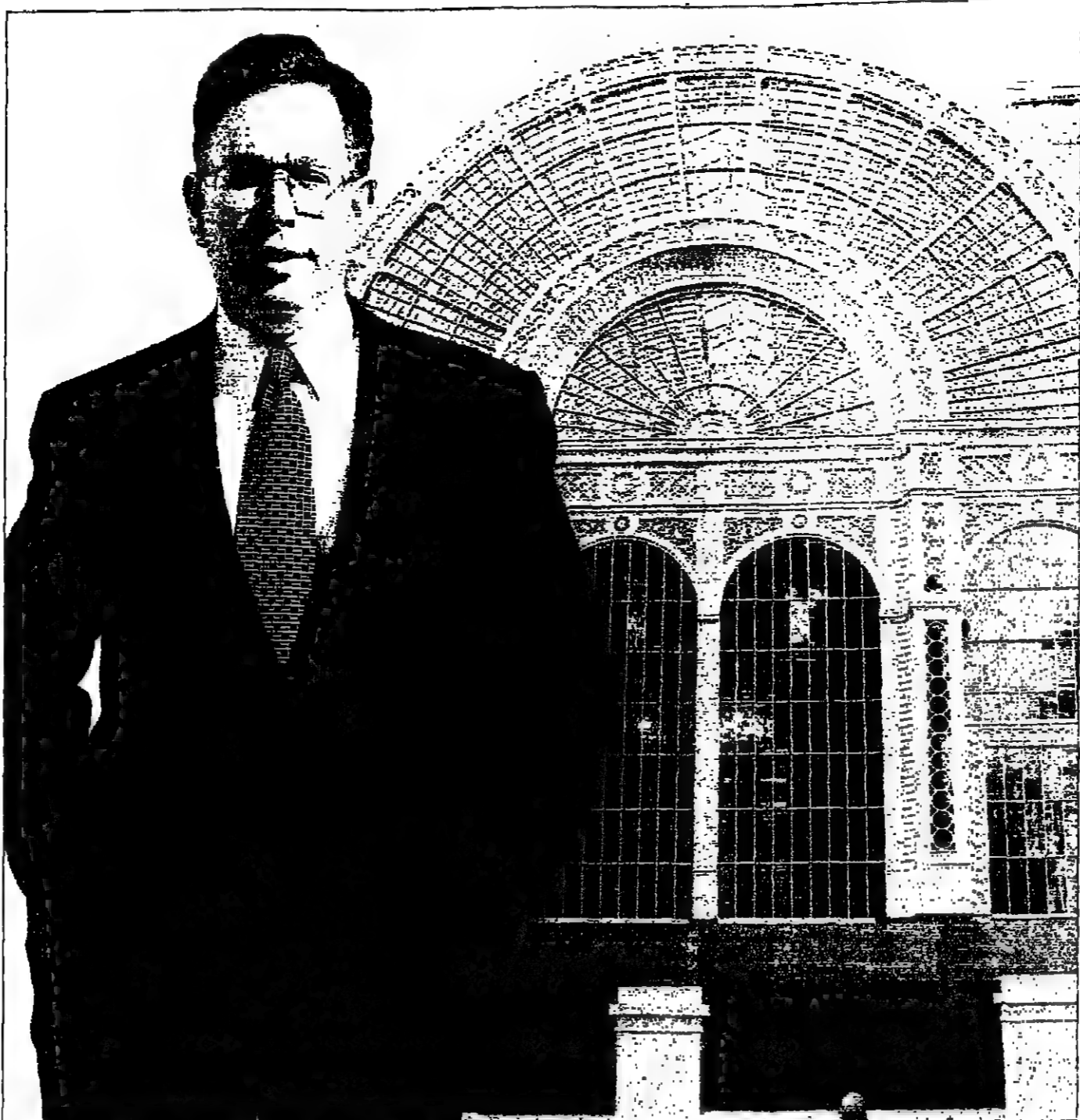


ARTS

Scenes of discord, deficits and despondency have been rife at Covent Garden. But now things are looking up for London's opera goers

# Crescendo of optimism

Covent Garden is rising from the ashes of its previous administration. Andrew Clark talks to the Royal Opera's new executive director, Michael Kaiser



Michael Kaiser: the real measure of the new facilities will be 'that the art continues to be wonderful and gets even more wonderful'

The main auditorium has a pristine aura of gold, ivory and red. The studio theatre is taking shape. The glass ceiling of Floral Hall looks spectacular, and through the builders' dust you can just make out the site of the amphitheatre bar, next to a new covered walkway overlooking the Covent Garden piazza.

The news from London's Royal Opera House is getting better and better, and the last stone - the appointment of an artistic director - should be in place within

all, he is young and vital. By tying his fortunes to the Royal Opera as it climbs out of the mire of redevelopment, he will assume a greater burden of responsibility than any other conductor in its history.

A year ago the board was looking for a general director similar to Hugues Gall at the Paris Opéra: a man possessed of artistic and administrative flair as well as political antennae. By last autumn the prescription had changed to that of artistic director, to complement the backroom skills of the newly-recruited Kaiser.

The model is that of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where Joe Volpe assumes overall command and devolves artistic responsibility to James Levine and his assistants. But unlike the Met, which has no dance company, Covent Garden's new power-structure guarantees the Royal Ballet an equal voice.

The appointment will not take effect until 2002, enabling Bernard Haitink to see out his contract as music director, and giving Kaiser room to entrench himself as *de facto* general director. That would be just fine: the repertoire for the first three seasons is already in place, leaving the new artistic/music director a pre-eminent voice in long-term planning.

It's hard to imagine a jet-set conductor becoming the public face of the new theatre, any more than the media-shy Anthony Dowell. By letting the loquacious Kaiser take the pivotal role, the board is stressing the opera house's new-found fiscal responsibility.

Kaiser, 45, oozes competence. Having turned round three ailing ballet companies in the US, he understands the psychology of image-making - a crucial skill in an environment weighed down by problems of the past.

Unlike his predecessors at Covent Garden, Kaiser is media-friendly and has an answer for everything. He stresses his supportive role: "My job is hearing what the two artistic directors want to do, it's proposing timeframes in which that becomes affordable, and it's finding the resources, in supporting them. I play a leadership role in respect to donors, government agencies and a lot of the staff."

Although Kaiser's track-record suggests three years is his maximum in one place, he expects to spend at least five at Covent Garden. He doesn't have a contract: he can walk out whenever he wants, a fact of which the board will be all too aware.

The recently published diaries of Mary Allen, one of Kaiser's short-lived predecessors, provide graphic accounts of interference by Vivien Duffield, a wealthy member of the board - but Kaiser has no fears in that respect.

The odds-on favourite for the appointment of artistic director is Antonio Pappano, 39, music director of the Monnaie in Brussels

the next week or two. The odds-on favourite is Antonio Pappano, 39, currently music director of the Monnaie in Brussels. Pappano would have the same leadership role with the Royal Opera as Anthony Dowell at the Royal Ballet. That would leave Michael Kaiser, the executive director recently imported from New York, holding the balance of power. All that needs to be sorted out is the wording of the contract - which could be settled by Easter.

Pappano, born in the UK but trained in the US, has conducted at Covent Garden just once, 10 years ago. His appeal lies in the fact that he has a recording contract, an international career and a skill that extends across Italian and German repertoire. Above

## Happily humming along at the Coliseum

Nicholas Payne can afford his own little in-joke in his first programme for his new house, writes Antony Thorncroft

request of Covent Garden. Payne is keeping his major fireworks for the autumn of 2000 when his millennial tribute celebrates 400 years of opera in the form of 10 new productions in three months, starting at the beginning with Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* and ending with Verdi's *Requiem*, taking in Handel's *Agrippina* and Puccini's *Manon Lescau* on the way. It is a confident programme and Payne is glad he switched jobs. While Covent Garden seems to be slowly approaching the sunlit heights it still carries a massive deficit and will be forced to present truncated seasons. In contrast at ENO Payne is ending a financial year

in which attendances have risen by over 11 per cent, to 86 per cent of capacity, and the books have balanced. Thanks to a £25m grant from the Arts Council's stabilisation scheme, the ENO also carries no deficit. No wonder he is freezing ticket prices for 1999-2000. Of course some of the ENO's recent appeal to audiences is due to the closure of Covent Garden: it is the only show in town for opera lovers. Next season Payne must compete with a new 2,200 seat auditorium that everyone will want to visit. By a nice irony he has known all along what Covent Garden will be presenting in its new home: he devised the programme.

The ENO hit its box office targets for 1998-99 mainly because it recently brought back popular favourites like *La traviata* and *Barber of Seville*. Just under 40 per cent of performances have sold out. However the season failed to produce a bankable new production, although the latest debutante, *Parsifal*, steadily picked up bookings through good word of mouth. Payne maintains a good relationship with Covent Garden. Indeed there are plans for the two opera houses to co-operate, most notably by presenting work created by ENO's opera studio in the new small theatre at Covent Garden.

The ENO must also feel that the Arts Council owes it something for providing London with opera while its near neighbour had, until recently, converted a £75m lottery grant into management turmoil and bad publicity. The ENO long ago gave up ambitions to build a brand new 21st century opera house somewhere in London. It is stuck with the Coliseum, an exhausted 100 year old variety theatre, much loved by its audience. It will soon be asking the Arts Council for over £20m to carry out essential refurbishment, from new seats to better back stage facilities. If, as anticipated, the money comes through, the work will probably take place in

the summer of 2001. If Payne is relaxed about the re-opening of Covent Garden, convinced by research that the two opera houses appeal to different audiences, there is one area where competition remains intense: raising the essential additional funding from companies and individuals to stay in business. This gets ever more difficult. Ms Russell Willis Taylor, who looks after the nuts and bolts management of the ENO while Payne remains artistically supreme, thinks the future lies with support from opera-loving individuals rather than from the corporate sector. *Parsifal* became possible

### RADIO MARTIN HOYLE

## The monster who grew out of American society

Not all our preoccupations with things American are manifested so shoddily as the midwestern tosh of Radio 4's *Mister*. Next Friday Radio 4 airs the first of four plays about J. Edgar Hoover, a figure vaguely perceived as monstrously influential in the more machavellian corridors of American power for half a century.

The good news is that the writer is Mike Walker. Though responsible for the excellent adaptation of *The Thin Red Line* - catch part 2 on Radio 4 this evening - Walker is something of a specialist in American themes. He has worked with Hoover's director, the American Ned Chaillet, on plays about presidents Johnson and


Nixon: he considers subsequent presidents less interesting ("though Clinton is doing his best"). Walker finds Hoover fascinating because "he was there in government from about 1920 to 1971. He knew everybody. He was director of the FBI for about 40 years." And, by implication, had something on everyone. Hoover's fixations cast a huge if shapeless shadow over American politics, starting with the post-Grand War "red scare". "He was obsessed all his life by the

threat to the American way," says the author. "His other obsession was the FBI. It was his thing, his machine." A modern audience, of course, has its own obsessions with public figures: their private lives, for instance. "He's a monster," Walker admits. "A real one, not a comic book or horror film monster. He grew out of American society."

The four plays deal equally with private life and public face (such as it existed - "Hoover hid everything. He admitted to finding secrecy addictive. It's difficult to winkle out a human figure"). Some mythical sacred cows are humanely, if disappointingly, slaughtered. Though Hoover's relationship with Clyde Tolson was "a virtual love affair" for 30 years, the rumours of cross-dressing are probably unfounded. "He was too damned careful. I

darkens his voice as the decades pass. For the writer, radio provides infinitely more access to the production process, unlike film and television where about his subject. "It was idiosyncratic but the FBI was never corrupt," says Walker, slightly surprisingly. "The CIA used gangsters but the FBI was

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OFF-CENTRE

# Wanted: heirs to a fabulous fortune

Genealogists have competed to track down relatives of Dora Maar, Picasso's lover, muse and hoarder of his mementoes. Robert Graham reports

Wedged between boutiques in one of the most fashionable streets on the left bank of Paris is the portal of a grand 18th century town house.

This hotel particulier, which has been in the Andrieu family for four generations, holds the secrets of one of the most arcane professions in France. The Andrieus are genealogists. They make their living by finding the relatives of the dead.

The business has a Dickensian feel - lawyers looking for lost heirs in cases stretching over generations. Indeed, the Andrieus' three-storey property contains more files than most public record offices in France.

Jean-Marie Andrieu, head of the company, takes great pride in showing visitors these remarkable archives. The oldest occupy thousands of drawers in hand-made wooden cabinets which stretch from floor to ceiling in room after room of the 3m-high ground floor.

In the mid-19th century the business began copying, for its own convenience, the civil registry files of Paris and the surrounding region. It now possesses a complete set of these files from 1793, when the registry was started, until 1923 (thereafter all births had to contain the place and date of the parents' birth). They are written in a fine copperplate hand.

The Paris registry files were burned in the commune riots of 1871, so this is a unique record of the births, deaths and marriages of several generations," says Andrieu.

The rooms are kept cold to preserve the paper. There are more than 200m individual files on slim leaves of paper, all unbound and kept in loosely tied bundles. "Our experts can flip through them fast, like counting banknotes," says Andrieu.

In 1994 Jean-Marie and his brother Francis wrote a book, *Recherche Héritiers* (Searching for Heirs), but their activities went little noticed by the general public until a spectacular genealogical chase came to light last year.

The hunt was to find heirs to the fabulous estate of Dora Maar, the photographer and painter who was Picasso's lover and muse for seven formative years of the great artist's career. Maar's affair with Picasso lasted from 1938-43, covering the crucial period of the Spanish Civil War and the worst of the German war-time occupation of France.

When Picasso left her, she continued taking photographs and painting for a while, but then became a religious recluse, and died in near-obscure obscurity in 1987. She had made a will in 1953, but by the time of her death there was no surviving named beneficiary.

Because her latter years had been so reclusive, no one imagined she had kept so many works and mementoes of Picasso - from drawings on matchboxes and impromptu illustrations of books,



to doodles with fragments of torn paper and ornamental jewellery made specially for her. These had acquired immense value because of their intensely personal nature, and because Maar's relationship with Picasso was crucial to his creative output at the time.

Shortly after her death, Maar's lawyers turned to Andrieu. Three weeks later the hunt was joined by a smaller business, Aubron-Delcros-Delabre, formed in 1980. "We think there were at least two other firms looking," says Antoine Delabre, one of the partners.

French inheritance laws are complex and comprehensive, permitting far more claims by distant relatives, and over longer periods, than in other parts of Europe. Under a law of 1918, a French cousin six times removed can lay claim to an estate. Only if this remote link fails to be found does all claim end after 78 years.

French law also stipulates that when the nearest surviving heir is traced, more distant relatives lose their claim. Providing heirs can be found, the inheritance is divided between those on the maternal and paternal side.

Maar was an only child whose French mother, Louise, née Voisin, had died in 1942. Her maternal heirs were easy to trace through civil registry documents. The lucky relative was a cousin six times removed: an 83-year-old woman living in western France who had no idea of Maar's fortune.

On the father's side, it was

immensely more complicated. Both his first name, Joseph, and family name, Markovitch, were very common in his native Croatia. Furthermore, he had worked as an architect outside Croatia briefly in France but mostly in Argentina. The search involved checking his past in Argentina and combing parish documents in the newly independent states of Croatia and Serbia after the disruptions of two world wars and the break-up of communist Yugoslavia.

After five months' detective

work, Andrieu ran to ground a cousin six times removed who lived in Serbia. But even then his company's rivals refused to give up. "It was a terrible blow when we were told about this find by Andrieu," Delabre recalls, "and there was only an outside chance we could find a closer relative."

Delabre's company was examining the line of Maar's paternal grandmother - who, they had discovered, came from a family of six brothers and sisters, orphaned at an early age. After a number of false starts, one of

these sisters was found to have survived issue - a 93-year-old woman living in a poor village about 150km from Zagreb. Just before Christmas 1997, Aubron-Delcros-Delabre was able to register its heir and so win the right to half of the residue of the Maar estate.

In a sensational Paris auction last autumn, the most valuable items in Maar's estate topped FFY300m (£30.8m). Other personal effects from her studio will be sold this year. Both genealogy companies are coy about their

cut on this find.

Successorial genealogists operate on a percentage of the estate that increases in relation to the distance the heirs are from the dead person. By the time it gets to a cousin six times removed, the percentage is normally fixed at 30 per cent. Whatever the actual amount was in this case, at least one set of Maar's heirs is reportedly unhappy about having signed away such a large slice of the estate and is seeking legal redress.

"This percentage is only taken after all death duties, debts and legal fees regarding the estate have been paid off. We are the last to get paid and must cover all the costs of the search ourselves at our own risk," says Delabre. "In the case of Maar, it is worth remembering the French state will be first, taking 60 per cent."

The riches of Maar's estate belie the more modest earnings from most inheritance cases. According to Andrieu, the average inheritance handled is little over FFY300,000. Nevertheless, there is enough business for Andrieu to employ 75 people, of whom 25 are in Paris, and the remainder in 15 provincial offices.

"We handle about 2,500 cases a year and account for about a third of the genealogical business," says Andrieu, who declines to reveal turnover. The younger and more aggressive Aubron-Delcros-Delabre processes about 1,000 cases a year

and says annual turnover is FFY20m.

There are about 25 successorial genealogy companies in France. The profession grew haphazardly in the wake of the French Revolution with the need to check inheritance claims, especially those involving provincial heirs. It prospered, aided by the nation's reluctance to leave wills and its laws which encourage the search for heirs.

Of the 450,000 people who die each year in France, at least 8,000 are intestate. In theory, anyone can search for their heirs. Amateur genealogists can follow the trail of the national census, established in 1801 by Napoleon, and thereafter continued every five years with only three interruptions (the Paris commune, the first and second world wars). However, the civil registries in France - the key instrument for proof of descent - are not open to the public.

The advent of information technology would appear to threaten the genealogical companies, as data becomes more accurate and available. France is also an increasingly stable society with the disruptions of two world wars receding; the genealogists are now dealing with the deaths of the generation born before the first world war.

But the nature of the business is changing. Delabre estimates that 30-40 per cent of business is now taken up with finding direct line heirs. This is confirmed by Andrieu: "Twenty five years ago there were scarcely any cases of simply looking for children of dead parents; but now families are breaking up, people don't know their cousins and 30 per cent of our work involves finding children."

Even when a will has been made, lawyers are turning to the genealogists to check whether all the immediate family is accounted for, especially in cases where several marriages have occurred. "In one in three cases we find another member of the family is also entitled to inherit," says Delabre.

Another expanding area is searches undertaken on behalf of companies to locate heirs to share certificates. The recent focus on the question of Jewish property under the Nazi occupation of France has also begun to offer a complex ground of activity. "We are handling about 60 Jewish dossiers. Some relate to people who came forward after seeing the list of account names published last year by the Swiss banks," says Delabre.

He believes the collapse of communism has opened up the prospect of claims from immigrants who came to France and who could have title to inheritances in eastern Europe. His vision of the genealogists' future is bullish: "We've been growing, on average, 30 per cent a year and I reckon we can do 10 per cent more if we are prepared to move outside France."

Though Rudolph Giuliani, New York's mayor, may have driven the National Academy of Recording Arts and Science's Grammy Awards ceremony back to Los Angeles, Manhattan can now boast a night with almost as much cachet, if not one with the same power to make or break careers.

The first annual Karaoke Grammy Awards, held earlier this month, probably didn't fuel any album sales. But the live performances by Manhattan's downtown crowd easily rivalled even Madonna's lip-synching efforts at the Los Angeles event.

Until recently, New York's nightclub scene was content to dress up and dance, to see and be seen. The karaoke microphone was left to college students on drunken junkies to New Orleans and Japanese businessmen enjoying the overseas expense accounts of the 1980s.

But in recent months karaoke has been embraced by the hip and off-hungover, and Wednesday nights at The Elbow Room on Bleeker Street, the main artery of Greenwich Village, has nightclubbers strutting their stuff onstage alongside celebrities such as actress Claire Danes, restaurateur Nell Campbell, heavy metal David Lee Roth and R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe.

Others such as model Bijou Phillips, MTV news-jock Serena Altschul and former *Seinfeld* girlfriend Shoshanna Lonstein occa-

DISPATCHES

## It's my party and I'll sing if I want to

Mark Wallace, at Manhattan's first Karaoke Grammy Awards, sees the Lifetime Achievement statuette won by the evening's hostess

Judging from the capacity crowd on Wednesday nights, Bernstein has had no trouble promoting her latest venture. The handful of tables near the club's stage are filled before the show begins at 11pm with dozens of guests hand-picked by the hostess. More crowd in behind, and the singers have to squeeze

Black Sabbath's *War Pigs* are assayed by the mostly twenty-something crowd. The Madison Square Garden of karaoke venues, The Elbow Room does demand a certain stage presence of its performers. Most of New York's karaoke machines are installed in small bars or in the back rooms of Jap-

anese restaurants. The Elbow Room's raised stage, in contrast, looks out on a cavernously high-ceilinged club packed with fans hungry for entertainment. Mousing that stage and seeing all eyes turn your way can be a chilling moment, giving rise to much fiddling with hair and microphone cords. Not all the performers possess the composure to pull it off. Fortunately, they have a bit of help. Karaoke

them permission to be silly." Karaoke has caught on, according to Steinberg, because New York's nightlife lacks any kind of "interactive behaviour" besides dancing. "It's an active evening where you're not just standing around holding up the walls."

"Karaoke gives people an opportunity to live out their rock star or lounge singer fantasies." And whether singing karaoke standards such as Neil Dia-

mond's *Sweet Caroline* or crooner faves like *That's Life*, most performers tackled their material as if immersed in celebrity culture.

And, says Steinberg, it's not just the amateurs who can use a helping hand. "When famous people come to sing, it's not like the crowd came there to see them," he says. "So sometimes I have to help them out, too."

Lesser karaoke venues such as Little Korea on 18th Street, Winnie's in Chinatown and Village Karaoke on Cooper Square were flooded in the week before Grammy night by hopefuls intent on honing their acts in preparation for the big show.

There is much more than karaoke to be seen on The Elbow Room's stage. Whether it's Sing-along Steinberg astride a toddler's plastic tricycle, Rufus Wainwright in a duet of *Dream, Dream, Dream* with his sister Martha, or five girls belting their way through *Fame* as they leap around the stage, the evening includes fully-fledged, if impromptu, song-and-dance

numbers, not simply songs. In the end, the awards ceremony ran more or less as expected, with most statuettees (in the form of a gold-painted plaster Jesus) going to a small group of karaoke regulars and "industry" insiders.

Craig Wedren of Shudder to Think took home the Grammy for Best Male Vocalist, while Best Outfit in a Karaoke Performance was won by Frankie Inglesse, a Manhattan nightclub DJ.

Your correspondent's own rendition of The Isley Brothers' *If Your Thing* - a crowd-pleasing if not critically acclaimed performance - did not even garner a nomination.

The Lifetime Karaoke Achievement Award, not surprisingly, went to the evening's hostess, and more prizes may be on the way for Bernstein's show.

Music video channel VH-1 is close to picking up karaoke nights, complete with Bernstein and Steinberg as hostess and master of ceremonies, for its coming season. In the meantime, Bernstein contents herself with scaring up new talent, promoting her other weekly party (*Mothra*, a more traditional downtown gathering), and singing with her "country-New Orleans-indie rock" band, Douce Gimlet.

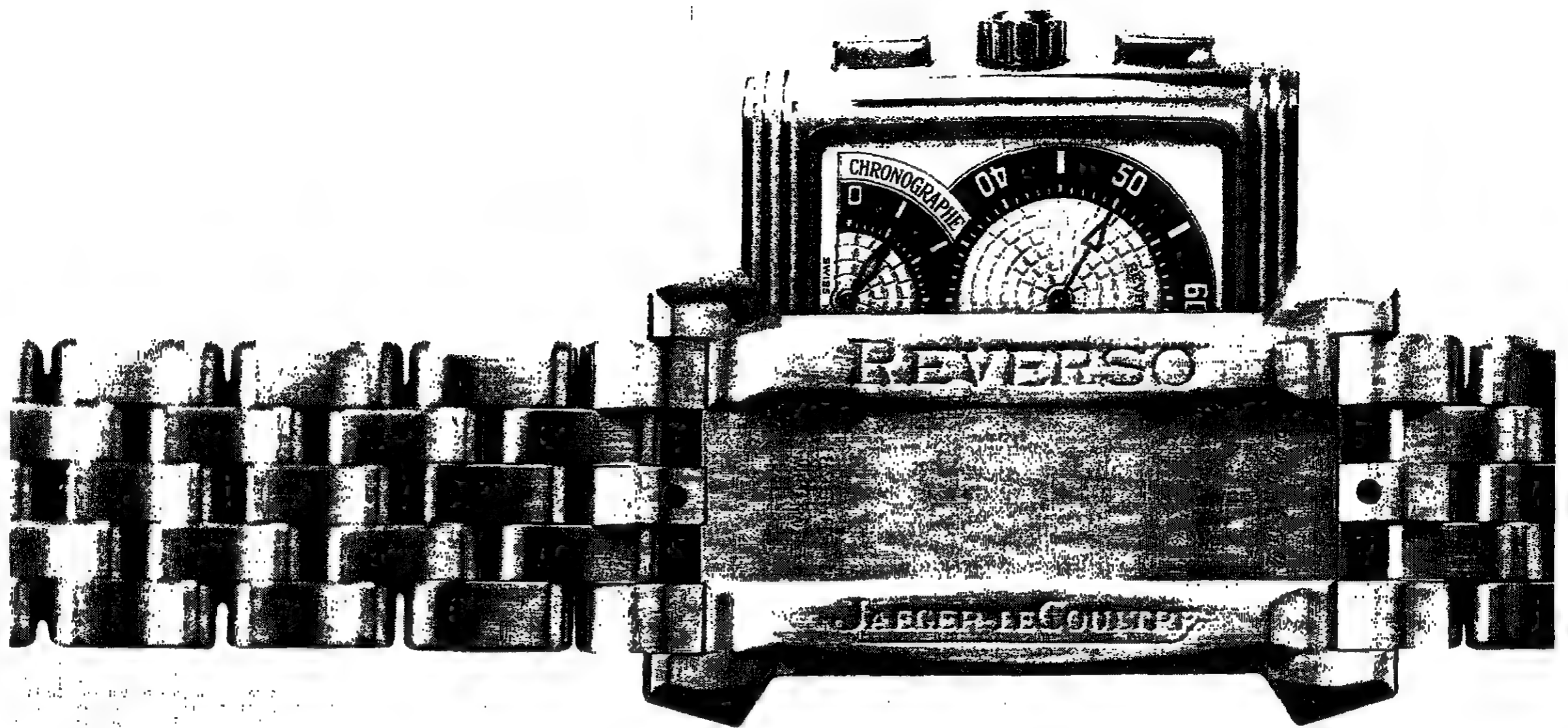
New York's downtown crowd will have to content itself with Wednesday nights at The Elbow Room, until next year's Grammys roll around.

The above concert...

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JP 110150

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# It's more than wistful thinking

Holly Finn is surprised that she is sold on 'down-home' American products found on both sides of the Atlantic

I wanted to dislike the man. I was ready for him to prove true what I'd read, that he is a profiteer from nostalgia who sells "repentance" to cash-rich, spirit-poor yuppies. At his New York City store, Jumbo Jerry four-sack towels - which, a sign tells you, are "an American staple from a thrifty era, when sometimes making do meant making sense" - cost \$10 for four. I mean, this pigeon was in the hole.

But when I actually met Stephen Gordon, founder and CEO of Restoration Hardware, one of America's most remarkable retail phenomena, with 65 stores nationwide and a growing fan club of customers who want homewares that are more warm than cool, I was disappointed. I liked him.

And liking the man is pretty much the same as liking his enterprise. He calls Restoration Hardware a "point of view" store and stocks the shelves with things he values - from Not Tonight Deer! deer repellent (\$11.95) to Tiburon teak steamer chairs (\$360) to "the original 1955 Duncan yo-yo" (\$14.75). He admits that, in pushing the philosophy of one man - down-home though it may be -

Restoration "is not a democratic institution". But it is inspired, even challenging. Gordon expresses his point of view by selling it; in turn, we express ours by reacting to him, by staying or going, buying or not. Gordon aims "to create an experience that's an absolute delight for our customers, and our shareholders", but it is we who decide whether to delight, or to doubt.

Restoration's goods are temptingly exclusive - in the way a four-leaf clover is

Walk into his new 17,000 sq ft shop at 22nd and Broadway in New York, and you're likely to hear Carly Simon on the sound system. "Stay right here," she sings, "because these are the good old days." Cynics may scoff, but Restoration customers do stay, for an average of 30 minutes said one report, well above the norm for other shops. The crustiest New Yorker spy Atomic Robot Man (\$15), and

cannot resist him. They discover Mr. Mole's sticky wax candle adhesive (\$2.50) and are charmed by the sign in front of it (one of the thousands Gordon writes himself) which reads: "A dorky name for a very intelligent product. Add sticky wax to the bottom of your tapers and, voila, no more leaning, dripping, candlelight ineptitude."

Gordon is baffled by the more "suspicious" types who suggest that his approach is cynical; that he is capitalising on the divide between heartstrings and charge cards. "Not only are you doing it," he says, "but you're doing it so craftily that you're coming off as genuine." From Eureka, California, north of San Francisco, where things are mellow, Gordon is beyond the ken of don't-mess-with-me eastern-style cynics. Those who have watched corner shops - down in a sea of cappuccino-pushing coffee chains, and the best small book-stores go under - in the wake of supermarket-sized emporia, are hardened. They look at Gordon's cv, see a psychology degree, and conclude that he's some sort of schemey, subliminal marketer.

Gordon's explanation of what drove him to start the company 26 years ago is slightly simpler. "I couldn't find goods and I was running out of money," he says. "I figured that if I sell you a chandelier, I can buy one. It was as inauspicious as that."

The son of a shoe salesman who never hit it big, or even medium, Gordon is married with three daughters ("I even have female dogs," he says). So far, he has managed to expand the company (he thinks a couple of hundred Restoration Hardwares in the US would be viable, more might be "vomitous"), while maintaining that corner-store feel with old-style, all-American products and all-American friendly service.

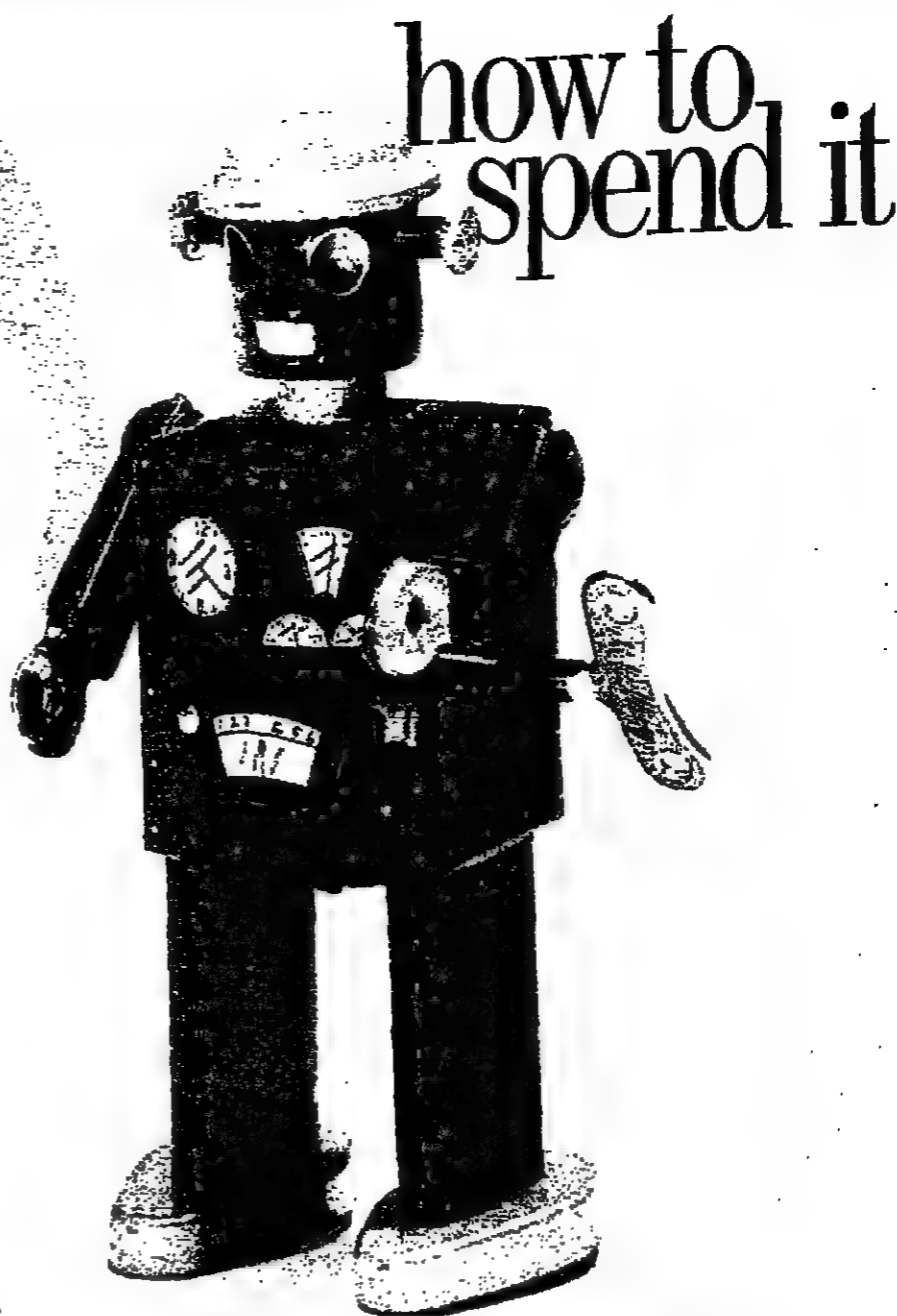
For instance, since many purchasing decisions are made jointly, the shops offer a Polaroid photograph service. If you fall in love with the deep-back Buster Chair, covered in soft Italian leather, but aren't sure your other half will feel the same about its \$1,800 price tag, you can take home a picture to bolster your argument.

Restoration's CEO doesn't feign ignorance of sales techniques, or of the importance of marketing and presentation. They fascinate him. Recently, walking down Madison Avenue after a day's shopping, he suddenly became aware that "no one looked at me. Everybody looked at my bags, and everybody looked at everybody else's bags."

The mass insecurity that makes us oggle and judge each other's labels is both good and bad for Restoration. Homewares, particularly furniture (which accounts for the greatest percentage of Restoration's sales), are weighty purchases, says Gordon.

"It's not the same as fashion. You can delude yourself by hanging a dress up in the closet for a while. You don't have to face it. But if you buy a lamp, it's right there," a seemingly irrevocable statement about your taste.

Restoration surmounts purchasing fear by offering goods that are temptingly exclusive, not in the way an outrageously expensive handbag



is, but in the way a four-leaf clover is - hard to find. Where else (except perhaps your grandmother's pantry) would you come across classic custard yellow-handled Tala Baking Utensils (\$4.95), or Tucker's Burn Guard oven mitt which is impervious to steam and heat-resistant up to 450C (\$14.99), or a bottle of Fox's U-Bet chocolate syrup?

Organising rack, the sort once used by stenographers).

Many of Jerry's customers are expatriate Americans who willingly pay \$4.95 for a pack of Oreo cookies or \$3.50 for Silver Palate salad dressing (these are staples, after all). British natives who have spent time in the US also seem to understand Jerry's optimistic angle. Planning to dine al fresco this summer, they've been scooping up his square tableware, called "Luca" (\$2.95-\$30).

Though many products sell as well in the UK as they would in the US, some things are lost in translation. Says Sacher: "All the paraphernalia for the holidays" on which Americans will happily spend hundreds of dollars, do not fly to the UK.

The British don't seem to believe in seasonal obsolescence. And they will not pay a significant mark-up for a water-bottle (as Americans do for Restoration's ribbed green version, \$12) - unless it's an amusing novelty item, stamped with a picture of the Empire State Building or a neon sign reading Paradise Motel (\$17.95 at Jerry's).

Despite differences between that retail environment and this, one thing is universal: instead of loving the one we're with, most of us would rather have precisely what we miss. What Gordon has done for years and continues to do, and Jeremy Sacher is doing now, is find for customers the things that make their heart sing.

In America, people crave U-Bet chocolate syrup because it's what

With Sputnik-era spunk Atomic Robot Man (\$15) winds up customers; Kirk's soap has them in a lather. They buy the Record Album Frame because old songs say so much. Behind it all: Stephen Gordon, founder of Restoration Hardware.

they miss from childhood. In England, it's what they miss from America. "Furnishing your home or eating isn't a life-threatening occupation," says Sacher, but it can make a tasty difference.

"Look at communities. The new buildings are not churches, not schools, they're retail," says Restoration's Gordon. "We feel it's our obligation to consume. It's scarier to consider not doing so. The economy depends on it."

Sometimes, rightly or wrongly, our happiness does, too. Gordon and Sacher provide soothing rather than scary shopping pieces, offering products chosen to make you grin and chuckle rather than test your acquisitive acumen. Gordon, for instance, spends much of his time and effort selecting worthwhile items for Restoration Hardware. If he didn't, he says: "It might as well be called Bedlam Merchandise."

Cool as craziness is in some parts, both Restoration and Jerry's are shops designed not to drive you mad, but simply to make basic needs less boring. Their shopping bags may not get gazed at on Madison or Bond Streets, but then it's not what's on the bag but what's in it that matters.

Restoration Hardware, 935 Broadway, New York, NY 10122 260 9479; Beverly Center, Los Angeles, CA 310-360 9652; The Falls, Miami FL 305-969 0100; Inquiries: 800-762 1005 www.RestorationHardware.com

Jerry's Home Store, 163 Fulham Road, London, SW3, tel: 0171-581 0909; The Village, Bluewater tel: 01322-427016.

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# Fab fabrics, that's devoré

Some days, flesh isn't enough. Like when you're tired of dressing yourself, and would enjoy dressing something else much more like your house.

London Design Week is the ideal time to take a look around and see what might suit your humble, or not quite-so, home. It starts tomorrow, and on March 24 all are welcome at the Chelsea Harbour Design Centre (and nearby showrooms), where the latest collections of fabric, furniture and decorative accessories will be on display.

For 364 days of the year, the centre is strictly for professional interior designers. So it's worth scheduling Wednesday in, if you want to get up close and personal with entire, and entirely new, ranges. You can also buy on the day. Call the herd of 90 showrooms before you set out, for there are a few that shouldn't be missed.

Zimmer+Rohde designs fabric that exemplifies the trend, now, towards furnishings that seem related less to domesticity and the family cat than to the catwalk. So delicate and gauzy are many of their swatches that you will be

tempted to call your dress-maker. A new line called Seta features double-layered organzas in gold and silver, less hung in your house than worn by it.

A new line of Jane Churchill fabrics centred around Pamina weaves also reflects the influence of fashion on furnishings. These fabrics are harder than organza, suitable for both soft furnishing and upholstery, but still pretty - without being precious.

Ottavio is a pattern that, from afar, looks like a traditional, smart check. Up close, the finely woven chenille pops out in 3D. Sitting on this is like sitting on a favourite sweater, only it doesn't get scrunched.

Announcing the arrival of devoré as a furnishing fabric, Osborne & Little this week unveils Fontaine. Inspired by screen idols such as Swanson and Dietrich, these materials have definitely got the women's ability to work a room. In shimmering emerald, sapphire, ruby, pewter and gold velvets - with sheer Art Deco patterns "devoré" (cut into the fabric - they are shockingly glamorous and feel like something new, evening wear for the home. At Bruno Triplet's high-

style but small showroom, you cannot miss the fashion influence. There are earth-toned fabrics crumpled a la Issey Miyake (and meant to be hung horizontally), 100 per cent mohair felts in colours such as burnt orange, soft inky-black linens and silvery silk voiles.

Like the best fashion designers, Triplet is always experimenting. He offers polyester taffeta in 30 colours as an alternative to the more costly and less resilient real silk. He even presents sculptural swathes of parachute silk run through with bamboo-like sticks. For huge loft windows, these are the ideal dressing.

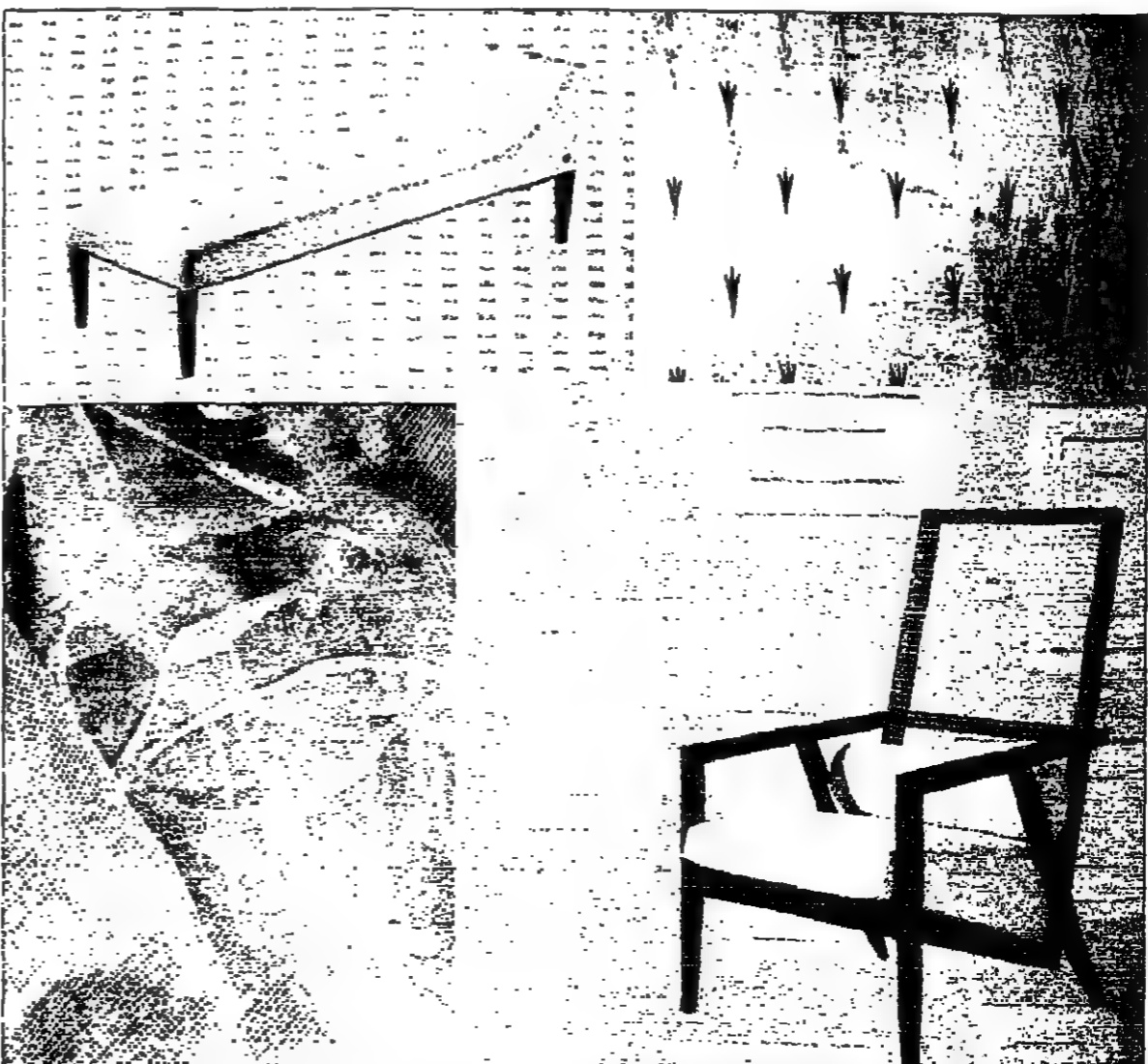
There are other experimenters, such as Ulf Moritz at Sahco Hesselein. His designs, useful for injecting a little testosterone into a room, include masculine grey tannin - plain, or with black stitching, even with holes punched out. They can make a chair look as bespoke as a suit. More feminine, and more Californian, is the Opposites Attract collection by Sally Sirkin Lewis, at J. Robert Scott. Her Floating Petals pattern has all the iridescent shimmer

of an Oscar nominee.

Design Week is not solely focused on fabrics, of course. There are plenty of floor coverings, tassels and table linens to keep your interest lit. Interdesign, for instance, is the exclusive dealer of Pierantonio Bonacina's Italian furniture designs, including the new Astoria line. It features chairs and sofas with strings of natural leather drawn taut across the back - instruments for sitting that have more give than any wood and metal string thing.

You may not be able to do it for a song, but dressing your house can be a lot more fun than dressing yourself. And it's a snap now that furnishings are in fashion. Even more, fashion is in furnishing.

Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, London SW10. Information: 0171-351 4432. Open to the public March 24, 10am-6pm. Interdesign (0171-376 5272); J. Robert Scott (0171-376 4705); Jane Churchill (0171-351 0665); Osborne & Little (304 King's Road, London SW3, 0171-352 1436); Sahco Hesselein (0171-352 6168); Bruno Triplet (0171-795 0355); Zimmer+Rohde (0171-351 7115).



Clockwise from top left: daybed (£1,560) by Fendi Casa. Behind: Ottavio (£45/m) from Jane Churchill. Swanson from Osborne & Little (£95/m). Chair (£1,094) at Interdesign. Behind: rug (£3,255) by Christine Van Der Hurd. Seta from Zimmer+Rohde (£46/m-£70/m)

*Handwritten note:* J.R. 1/20/99



What will the best dressed be wearing to pop year 2000 corks? Clockwise from left: transform into the next century with Junya Watanabe's suits. Comme des Garçons has foldaway chic with embroidered organza wraparound squares. A steady hand and easy touch with Galliano's impeccable tailoring. Check out the matchless ensembles from Watanabe's entrance-making show. It's all in the bag - oversized bright red duffel bag accompanied bold prints by Marc Jacobs at Louis Vuitton

Photograph: Chris Moore, Montage, Michaela Maga

# Final countdown: it's all about the eve

It's the most important question of the fashion year - what is there to wear for the eve of the new millennium? Vanessa Friedman reports from the Paris ready-to-wear shows

Forget fashion speak. What is your most pressing question about the Paris autumn-winter shows? Probably not what "directions" they went in (touchy-feely and techno), or what "fabrics" were used (fur, feathers, tweed), or what colour is the new black (black is always the new red), but rather the much more imperative: what is there to wear for New Year's eve 1999?

The answer is lots, from futuristic at Givenchy to transformative elegance at Junya Watanabe, earthy luxury at Hermès, and "We Are the World" chic at Galliano - as many different styles of clothes as there are of celebration, whether the plan is to stay in, stay aloft, or stay out all night.

Consider the first option, the choice of Michael and Shakira Calne, and then consider Hermès' signature cornucopia of casual, voluptuous luxury: drawstring pants in baby alpaca, long T-shirt dresses in cashmere, and pleated trousers or skirts, all in Zen-like shades of grey and brown, and swaddling soft.

Designer Martin Margiela has been playing with alternatives to the traditional structured jacket for the last few seasons, and this time created sheepskin stoles that hugged the shoulders, descending into coat-like lapels complete with hand-warming pockets, and double-layer cashmere coats and jackets (good for temperature control; if it gets hot, just shed a layer).

Staying in also inevitably means running out for last-minute supplies of Moët and Beluga, and in his proprietary line Margiela provided the casual coat of the week, the "duvet". Made by a duvet factory, with zip-on arms,

it was the definition of comfort chic, with the top two corners falling forward to form elegant lapels. What's more, like a duvet, it comes with different covers: grey serge, floral sheet and rain-proof plastic. Who wouldn't love to go out in their bedclothes?

For those planning to escape the city smog for the country's starry, starry night, the way to rough-it is in Ann Demeulemeester's unfinished Mongolian lamb or sheepskin coats, wrapped around the body and resembling the work of a fashion-conscious caveman. They go as well with a hillside as her artfully wrapped dresses go with a fire and a mug of mulled wine to toast midnight, although if the country means a manor house, Jean-Paul Gaultier came through with chunky beaded and befringed Peruvian knit sweaters and finely woven twin-sets that telegraphed organic art.

On the other hand, those who like their lettuce pre-packaged and their life gravity-defying may, like Rupert Everett, say Y2K be damned and decide to fly - even better, to chase daybreak - on Concorde. For the jet set, the natural place to look for a suitable wardrobe would be the home of the original jet-set designer, Yves St Laurent, and in his first collection for the house, Albar Elbaz went trawling through the archives of the 1960s and 1970s and came up with elegant (if not sound barrier-shattering) versions of YSL classics: long-sleeved trousers topped by a loose turtleneck and chunky fox vest, gender-bending pin-striped suits, and a superb *Belle de Jour* red leather trench.

Such clothes have the familiarity of a 747, but slicker and sharper alternatives are Olivier

Theyskens' black pantsuits with vents made body-conscious by hook-and-eye fastenings, and louche black cardigan dresses. Likewise, Nicholas Ghesquiere at Balenciaga produced slim-cut pants, skin-tight leather tops under geometric wool vests, and soignée silk evening gowns delicately pleated over a hip or breast, as neat and architectural as the nose of a supersonic jet.

The glamour of the private Lear was on view at Céline, where Michael Kors finally outgrew his American roots and went St Moritz in its heyday: grab a cherry zip-up ski sweater,

throw on some narrow trousers, top it off by a red satin parka complete with fur-lined hood, and skim over the international date-line. Alternatively, lounge in a matte sequined, long-sleeved T-shirt or the most outrageously luxurious sweater of the season, a knit mink turtleneck, courtesy of Narciso Rodriguez at Loewe.

Either way, the luggage to carry taxed down Louis Vuitton's runway: oversized duffels and totes in bright red or purple LV-embossed patent leather.

Marc Jacobs, after his muted start, has finally got the language of border crossings perfected and indeed, these are accessories which should sell the clothes - felted long skirts topped by cross-cropped jackets over go-anywhere turtlenecks and graceful knit slipdresses with a wave of dorsal fin - instead of the other way around. No self-respecting international nomad would leave home without them, whatever the destination.

Which might be a celeb-spangled, pina colada-fuelled bash in some sultry tropical paradise. Such a party demands colour and

If the invitation reads black tie, Yohji Yamamoto's romantic jewel-toned, velvet bathrobe coat/dresses, worn over either chunky turtleneck sweaters or floor-sweeping skirt and corset, have the elegance of a string quartet, while Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons played a Philip Glass/Yo-Yo Ma duet in a series of brightly tinted magenta and pink or silver and dove grey skirts and jackets made from organza which wrapped around the body to form graceful, easy-to-wear folds.

Waltzing to a slightly different

guard, included a handbag or a stole - except they weren't handbags or stoles, they were jackets: intricately pieced and zipped tops which unfolded to curve sensuously around the body.

Nevertheless, for show-stopping dresses, there is no one like John Galiano, who this season managed to still his sometimes heavy hand (the one that recently threatened to turn him into a parody) and produce a restrained set of zebra-striped chiffons and shimmering scarlet Aphrodite gowns. It's not cutting-edge or fashion-forward, but it's damn good, and it stood out in a week that was surprisingly short on gala-wear.

The only alternatives came from Valentino and Chanel, who offered, respectively, smoky chiffon kaftan blouses with billowing sleeves tapering into floor-sweeping pleated skirts, and chiffon-velvet versions of the Little Black Dress. Also fancy, but less formal, was Ungaro's gypsy chic - tiered chiffon skirts, heavily embroidered, and Mongolian fur-trimmed leather jackets, sweet rose-branch festooned slips.

The normally folkloric Dries Van Noten went austere nunn-like with long coats in Old Master shades, a mere glint of embroidery flashing from an underskirt. Come to think of it, Van Noten would be perfect for those who, like actor/director Roberto Benigni, are planning to hit Rome for the papal fête.

But for many, as for Sir Ian McKellen, going public will mean going to the millennium dome in London. The mix of ages and aesthetics is guaranteed to provide a dazzling display of sartorial fireworks. And it's easy to imagine Chloe's Victorian hippie lace blouses and skintight denim or

Beatles' era tweeds (topped by a Sherlock Holmes cape instead of a jacket) brushing against Veronique Branquinho's gothic pleated skirts, caught up on one side with an adjustable strap like the kind found on garment bags.

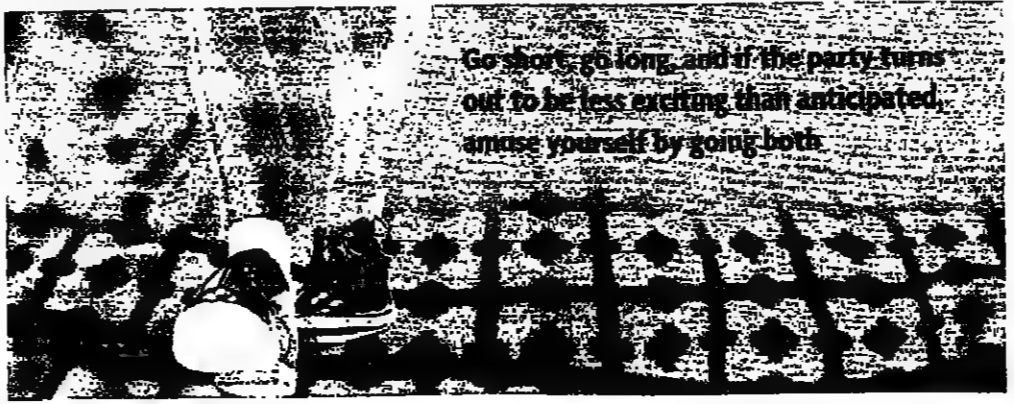
Also fitting would be Galiano's greatcoat skirts (the traditional military-style coat dropped to the hips in leather, tweed, or even rosebud-embroidered organza), Gaultier's witty trouser twinstet (an extra-wide pair of pants with the front slice of, say, leather motocross trousers embossed from thigh to ankle), and pretty much anything from Givenchy.

The only designer to embrace fully the space age, even if he did so through a Courrèges-tinted lens, Alexander McQueen sent out muscular, sharp-shouldered white or silver leather suits and velvet dresses printed with computer circuit boards, all of which would stand out like comets under the dome, though it would be advisable to avoid the orange moulded-plastic breastplate.

When there is so much to choose from, there is also a lot that should be avoided.

These include St Laurent's pageboy knickers and gigantic hot pink marshmallow sleeves; Miyake's starfish pleated tops, complete with a quasi-puppytail on the back which waggled up and down as the models walked; Chanel's Pocohontas blanket tops and slave shackle belts; Lacroix's enormous Halloween orange ballgown and black Christmas ornament sheath; Westwood's pirate hussy corsets; and Valentino's lace and satin tap pants, which should not be seen outside the bedroom or the bordello.

Of course, if you're planning a costume party...



Go short, go long, and if the party turns out to be less exciting than anticipated, amuse yourself by going both

FOOD AND DRINK

WINE JANCIS ROBINSON

The David and Goliath of vintage ports

Jancis Robinson was hit by a blinding flash of brilliance when she dragged herself along, reluctantly, to a tasting



There are times, dear reader, when wine tasting is a real chore. Last week, after a late night and on a Friday from hell stuffed with commitments...

sea change in my mood. Over the past two years or so, this tasting group of port professionals and aficionados had met to taste blind the various notable vintage ports of the 1980s and 1970s...

was surely an off bottle as this is a celebrated wine. (One taster had enjoyed a perfect bottle of it only the previous week, for example.) At these blind tastings, uncluttered by prejudices and the reputations attached to the grand names of port...

Mature vintage ports

Table with 3 columns: Year, Name, Type. Rows include Fonseca, Croft, Taylor, DeLaurie and Gilem, Dow, Graham, Calem, Kopke.

vintage port shippers from first down to fifth tier. In the first tier are the glorious names of Fonseca, Graham, Taylor and the Nacional bottling from shippers Quinta do Noval (once Portuguese but now French). The house of Calem languishes in the fifth tier...

the 1960s, and that Calem's British importers, owners of the Unwins chain of off-licences, were as stunned as the rest of us at the magnificent performance of their 1965. When I rang the dominant fine wine traders, Farr Vintners, that evening for a spot price on this rarely-seen combination of shipper and vintage, without explaining why...

dozen magnums of Calem 1966 available from head office at £125 each. Perhaps we should not be so astonished by the "surprising" conclusions of these blind assessments. Such comparative assessments are rarely, if ever, made in Portugal, and are almost as unusual anywhere else.

COOKERY

Mâche of the day

Philippa Davenport visits a market gardening area of northern France to sample its pride and joy, corn salad

After Sunday Mass, churchgoers in Nantes, in north-west France, visit a neighbourhood bakery - always open on Sunday, as is the French custom, for the essential provision of fresh baguettes and pâtisseries. What makes this Sunday shopping experience a typically Nantes happening...

The people of Loire-Atlantique are renowned market gardeners. Their land is close to the sea, blessed by a temperate Gulf Stream climate and an enviable long daylight hours, a great horticultural headstart. Planted to take advantage of mild winters with superior light, the primavera, early season produce, can reach the market place with remarkable speed.



Beetroot and lamb's lettuce; the salad is a speciality of the Nantesais

It is hardly surprising that the Nantesais feel a little proprietorial towards this salad when you consider that 300 of them grow it commercially, cultivating some 18,500 tonnes of the stuff (50 per cent of European production), with more forecast year on year as French appetites for it, and those of export markets, are expected to grow.

Larger, less delicate leaves but they grow in the same decorative daisy leaf-like rosettes. Whether wild or cultivated, the eating quality is much of a muckness: tender textured (hence the Provençal nickname doucette) and mildly nutty tasting (thus muss-headed to the Swiss).

At 8.30 on a muddy winter-morning, I watched a massive machine straddle the first of many tunnelled rows to peel back the plastic film and reveal the emerald green crop. The machine then lowered its harvesting knife, an angled razor blade the width of the row, and it delicately under the crop, sliced and lifted it (whole rosettes of leaves complete with hairy rootlets) in one continuous elegant movement.

Assuming the freshly harvested crop passes various quality assessment tests, it proceeds to the wash-house. No vegetable is so prone to trap sandy particles. Washing by dunking and dipping (the traditional solution for leaves that are easily bruised)

BREAD

French connection that knows how to make dough

Giles MacDonogh meets a pâtissier-cum-traiteur who is plying his trade in England rather than in his native France

Jacky Lesellier's company Bagatelle does all three. Which is odd. In France they say that a good pâtissier is a bad baker, and vice versa. The living dough needs a different, pragmatic approach to "dead" pastry. Still, Lesellier does well. He is a Frenchman, of course, but one who chooses to live in London, and that can only be good news in the notable absence of local talent.

He thought back to his roots in Normandy and the family baking business and contacted the Parisian pâtissier Gustave Lenoire. In 1980 he created the first French bakery in south-east Asia. By the time he left in 1984 there were two shops, a restaurant and five in-store bakeries.

Two years in the US proved a fiasco when the government refused to grant work permits for his team of eager bakers and pâtissiers. His daughter was at school in England and in 1988 he began sniffing at the English market. He found nothing good: industrial bread, worse cakes, and a desperate need for good bakery in top hotels and restaurants.

When I asked him why he continued to employ so many French people, even to answer the telephone, he smiled: "The French are better at dealing with chefs." His business as a traiteur is chiefly used by offices, although he is doing a little work for the Waitrose supermarket chain.

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Baker Jacky Lesellier (centre) with two of his staff

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variation is only to be expected. Overall, the 1960s were if anything more homogeneous than the 1930s, with even the "Cockburn" (i.e. the wine that would have been released as Cockburn 1966 had the shipper not decided instead to bottle a Cockburn 1967) looking quite mature but tasting still quite vigorous.

is insufficient to dislodge all the grit, and grit, as everyone knows, is vile to eat. The genius of the Nantesais system lies in a series of fine-tuned Jacuzzi baths, in which gentle bubbles and the occasional slow-motion paddle make the greenery shed its topsoil dust coat and emerge cool, clean and toothsome, ready for packaging.

do you mean," he asked in astonishment, "you don't know how to remove a fillet?" Now they buy whole birds and the carcasses go into the stock pot. We sat down to a 500 calorie lunch (I assumed the glass of claret was not included in the tally). Lesellier is much concerned with health - his own and other people's - and is developing a dietetic range of three-course meals.

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GARDENING

# A standard for Sunday that we can all envy

This year there are 3,500 gardens open for charity. Find them in the Yellow Book and you will not have time to dig your own, says Robin Lane Fox

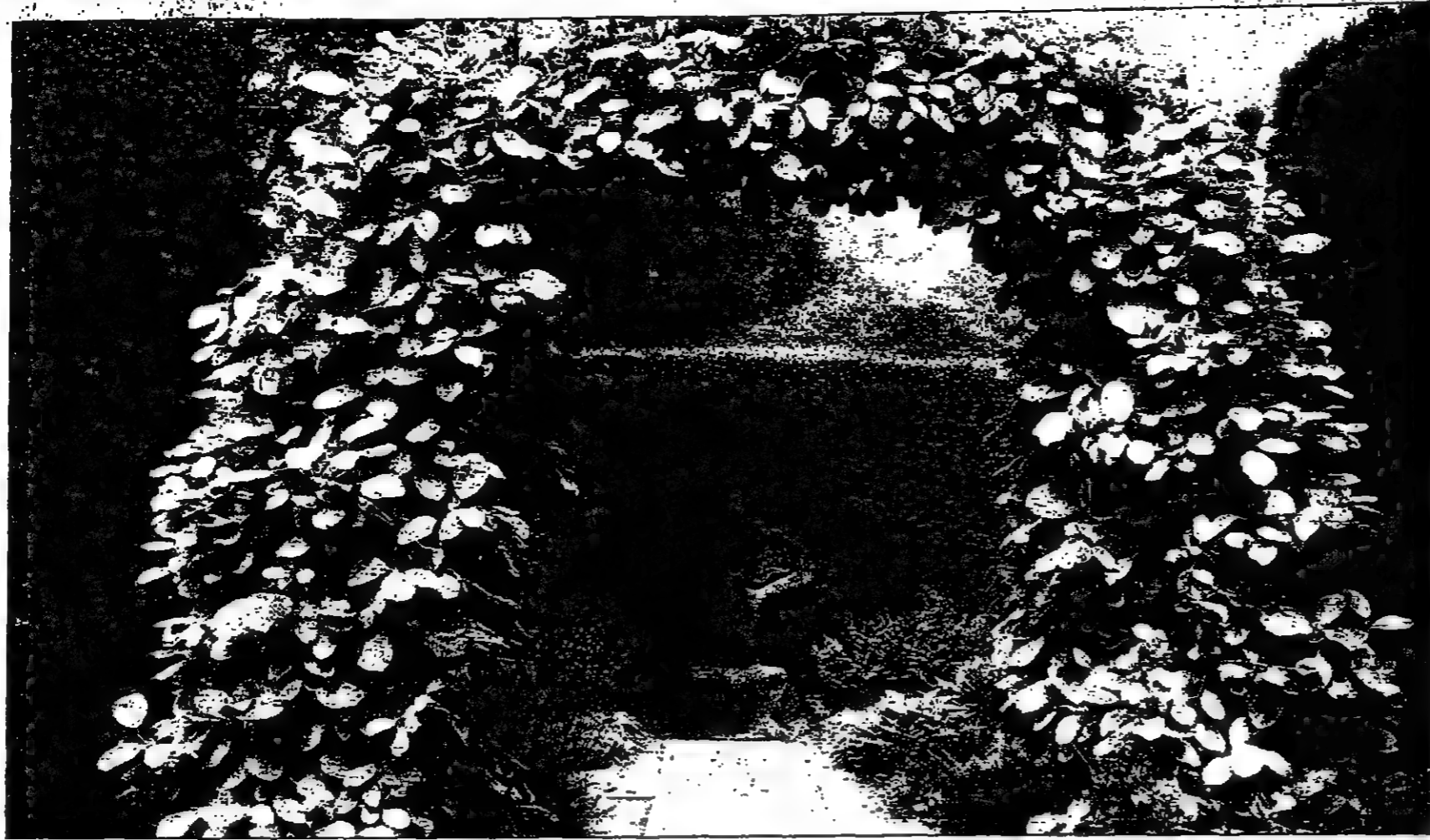
The exceptional days of spring weather have encouraged us all to look closely again at gardens - both our own and other people's. The essential companion to travelling, learning and quietly gazing is the Yellow Book of Gardens of England and Wales Open for Charity (24.50 for the 1999 edition). It has to be a bargain and this year the county maps are better than ever.

The number of gardens open continues to rise - 3,500 are now in the book - reflecting dedication to the UK's privately run national art. Many more are in counties which used to be a horticultural semi-desert. Shropshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are on the up and there are ever more new entries in ever smaller sizes.

Many of the newcomers write as if small is beautiful and perhaps they are right. I need persuading to spend a summer afternoon looking for a garden with "over 130 hardy geraniums", a patio and a planting plan installed in 1997. I also avoid groups of gardens which have caught the opening bug and advertise themselves in the same village. Their charitable enterprise is admirable, but I have never found a group which really stands up on individual merits.

Last year, the scheme raised more than £1.4m for charity and gave enormous pleasure to visitors, some of whom come specially to England for a week at the end of June. As the years pass, great gardens are handed on through the generations and inspire imitation and improvement. At Kiltgate Court in Gloucestershire, you can see the efforts of three successive generations of the same family, gardening without national grants and setting a standard we all envy.

In Hampshire, Brandeish House, off the A272, has about 60 years of continuity from mother to daughter and a great reputation for its dark-stemmed camellia, herbaceous borders and summer colour. In Berkshire, The Old Rectory, Burghfield, continues to open since the death of the female half of its partnership, and her daughter's garden can now be enjoyed at Towersey Manor, Towersey in Oxfordshire, made from scratch since 1874. Keen gardeners do not always inspire their children, but the



An arch covered in twining branches of two Sorbus arlesianensis frames a Swiss Vase sculpture in the rose garden at Kiltgate Court, one of the private gardens open to the public.

best gardens are beginning to develop some notable sports in the next generation.

The classic season for visiting is the season of old roses, especially in private gardens which we would never see otherwise. Particular favourites range from Wartnaby in Leicestershire, to The Manor, Hemmingford Grey in Cambridgeshire and Hodges Barn in Gloucestershire. Visitors speak very well of Shore Hall, near Brantree in Essex, which is enticingly illustrated in colour and goes to the upper quartile of my visits for this year. It looks as usual as if there would never be a dull Sunday, if only we could all afford to leave our own gardens to run themselves.

In the past decade, the number of open gardens has doubled and particular fashions are becoming

clear. Wild flowers are freely advertised and there is a much greater range of gardens round everyday houses in towns, from 139 Berry Hill Road, Mansfield (open on June 20), to the London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E2, which offers a roof garden and steep steps.

On May 23, you could visit 1 Pannur Road, London SW20, where the garden is 70ft long and gives the Australian owners' interpretation of an English walled garden in miniature. It includes the Union Jack in the layout of the path. In Gloucestershire, you can try The Old Rectory, Duntisbourne Rous, where the garden is said to have "10 distinct moods". Most of us have two, optimism or frustration, when we look closely at the prospects of a new season.

If in doubt, always opt for gardens which advertise one of the National Collections of a particular plant. In Dorset, Mews Cottage, Portland, holds nearly 200 penstemons, one of those additions to the visiting year which have only sprung up since the plant conservation movement began in the 1980s.

Older gardens are also springing back to a new life. In Somerset near Wellington, I hear great things of Cothay Manor which was laid out in the 1920s by an old friend of the Nicholsons at Sissinghurst and has been thoroughly restored since 1994. In Wales, Llanilly, Talsarn near Lampeter has been renovated and enlarged beyond its original plan from the 1850s. At the National Trust property of Llanmerchaeron near Abercrom, the

large walled gardens will be open for the charity scheme on Sunday August 22 and we can appraise the continuing work, all of it done for free by dedicated volunteers.

The Gardens Open scheme is envied in many countries and is imitated in the US by The Garden Conservancy. Send \$10 and \$3.50 postage to PO Box 219, Cold Spring, New York 10516, to receive this year's directory of gardens open. In Scotland, the Gardens Scheme Handbook costs £3.75 from Scotland's Gardens Scheme, 31 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2EL. Scottish gardens can be great havens by late July when the summers are proving too hot in the south.

In the view of many owners, the one cloud on the horizon is the low level of decency among visitors. Thefts show no sign of declining and the rarer the plant, the more it is at risk. I know owners who view their open days with mixed feelings because of the absenteeism apparent the next day. Among the charitable visitors, the hard-core of looters continues to be an expert menace. I doubt if they can really grow much which they seem to pinch at a quiet moment.

On Sundays which raise so much so well for charity, it is awful that many cuttings go wandering with visitors out of the garden gate. Kiltgate is open for the National Gardens Scheme on Saturdays May 8 and August 14 (2pm to 9pm) and Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from April 1 to Sept 30, including Sprays in June and July.

LUCY'S PLOT

## Green grow the rushes - oh dear

There is a rather bleak statement in one of my gardening handbooks: "A beautiful lawn is the wish of many but it requires a great deal of care and the results often don't fully satisfy us." Never a truer word spoken.

My lawn is a miniature thing. You could say I was growing grass more as a vegetable than a garden feature. There just isn't room for a grand sweep and I had hoped that extra small would be the equivalent of extra beautiful.

Or so it seemed to start with but about this time last year a few little extra pointed sprigs started to appear among the young grass. I thought my chives had self-seeded from the next-door bed but after a test nibble, I found they tasted of bogs, not onions. I was forced to admit it was rushes that were taking over.

Things have improved a little since then but bowling will not be possible this summer either.

I wonder if perhaps the problem is not one of drainage or choice of seed, but one of gender.

I'm sure that what's needed is not just blood, fish and bone but testosterone. I suspect that lawns, like boats and sports cars, are spoken of in the feminine.

I know I've heard men say things like "she could do with a spot of rain" or "she'll need a good dressing at the end of the season". Manly attention, please.

Back in the girls' department I'm longing for the reappearance of various bulbs and tubers I put in a while back. The most longed for are buried in a ferny corner: the Trilliums. It's not just the lovely dusky colours and stately leaves, fascinating in a rather witchy, sinister way. I'm told the common name for Trillium sessile is "Dead shade" and for Trillium erectum it's "Birdroot". There must be a witches' brew potential there.

Although this is not the time for making broomsticks, we are now approaching the moment of "bad burnt", the time when silver birch twigs can be collected to make kitchen whiskies. The bark can be stripped off and the twigs bound together. Witchy but nice.

Lucy Ogilvie-Grant

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# Always A Great Place To Be

Miles of beaches, acres of rainforest, skies full of sunshine, friendly people and an endless variety of delicious food, Malaysia is simply the tropics at their best.

**M**arketing Malaysia as a tourism destination has long proved difficult. Classic marketing theory of focussing on a unique selling point, and sending out a single-minded message, doesn't work. No single image can sum up a country that has so much to offer the traveller.

Fortunately for consumers, it's a simpler proposition. If you want to see, smell, taste and experience the tropics at their best, go to Malaysia. It's big enough to provide a huge diversity of attractions and terrain, yet with transportation easy and plentiful, you can cover a lot of ground without feeling pressured.

Nature has been especially kind to Malaysia, she gave her dramatic landscapes yet gentle weather. The rainy season brings refreshing downpours but it never rains continually, and there are neither typhoons nor earthquakes. Beaches are clean and safe. The water is always warm, and generally the seas are calm and surf-free.

English is widely spoken as a result of its colonial heritage and high level of literacy. The national language, Bahasa Melayu, with its roman script and easy pronunciation, is the most approachable in Asia. After a few attempts you can confidently order breakfast in Bahasa — and the locals will encourage you every step of the way.

Malaysia's best asset, of course, is its people and having welcomed travellers and merchants for half a millennium, hospitality comes naturally. Service is warm and gracious with none of the scripted falsity that you so often hear in the West today.

The diversity of attractions — and accommodation — means that Malaysia has something for everyone, at every stage of life, activity level and at almost every price. And for some old-fashioned rest and relaxation, Malaysia's main resort centres such as the islands of Penang and Langkawi, the east coast towns of Cherating and Kuantan, Kota Kinabalu in Sabah and

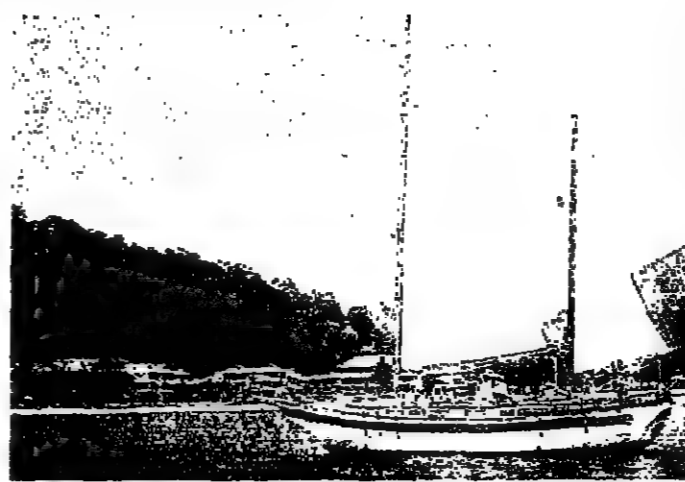
top, if you can't leave your children at home, check in to The Andaman next door on the same glorious crescent of beach. Luxurious but low-key, spacious and with a lagoon-style shaded pool, it is more family friendly — and so's the price.

On Penang, the Shangri-La Rasa Sayang is one of Malaysia's oldest and best loved resorts with superb gardens fringing the beach — an excellent spot to sip wine, read or even play petanque. Staff bring you chilled tropical fruits and cold towels throughout long sultry afternoons. Further south, the Pangkor Laut Resort offers a choice of private villas. Ones on stilts above the gerty lapping sea are guaranteed to cure any insomnia. This delightful and romantic resort on a private island was opened with a concert by Luciano Pavarotti back in 1994.

On the East Malaysian state of Sabah, the superb Shangri-La Tanjung Aru Resort is a favourite with couples and honeymooners. This sophisticated resort offers unforgettable sunsets over the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park dotted with tiny deserted islands. Have one to yourself for a champagne picnic with delicious food and transport by speedboat organised by the hotel.

In Sarawak, the other East Malaysian state, there is the gentle Damai Beach which offers a number of resorts, including the Holiday Inn. Close to wildlife sanctuaries and the Sarawak Cultural Village, it's a good base for families and couples to explore the interior.

For families and the more budget conscious, Malaysia has options galore. Many resorts offer family packages, children's activity clubs, family rooms and even waive charges for youngsters sharing with parents. The Shangri-La's three properties in Penang — the Golden Sands, Palm Beach and the upmarket Rasa Sayang — sit side-by-side on Batu Feringi beach. Together they form probably the biggest, best equipped resort in Malaysia for families — cross-



Langkawi island's crystal clear waters tempt sailors, and water-sports lovers (top right)

signing facilities mean you can stay in one and play in the others.

On peninsular Malaysia's quieter and more traditional east coast, the Club Med at Cherating is designed to resemble a Malay village or kampung. It boasts a circus school as well as the usual Club Med facilities. The Pan Pacific Resort on Pangkor Island is also a favourite with families.

For cooler options, the former hill stations in the Cameron Highlands offer temperate rounds of golf and cream teas to rival any in England. The Genting Highlands has several resorts which offer activities such as riding and trekking. There's an outdoor theme park for kids — and for grown-ups, Malaysia's only casino.

If you really want to escape the crowd, head for Malaysia's east coast where old customs and festivals thrive. Here most accommodation is in rustic chalets, homestays and small hotels. Travelling by rail, rented car, shared taxi or boats upriver into national parks or out to the many unspoiled islands is easy, fun and safe.

The fishing village of Mersing offers access to the laid-back islands of Rawa and Sibu amongst 60 others. Or you can hop across to Tioman, immortalised as the setting for the musical *South Pacific*. The lovely Berjaya Tioman Resort offers chalet style accommodation, horse riding through the rainforest, trekking, snorkelling and scuba-diving. Further north are the islands of Perhentian, Kapas and Redang, now the site of the Berjaya Redang Beach Resort and Redang

to Europe. It's fair to say that all of East Malaysia is wild. There's plenty to explore in Sarawak, Malaysia's largest state. It is home to Mulu, Bako, Niah, Batang Ai and Lambir Hills national parks. Mulu has the biggest limestone caves in the world — one cavern is big enough to accommodate St Paul's Cathedral five times over. There are 20 different ethnic groups and some of the most diverse dipterocarp forest on earth.

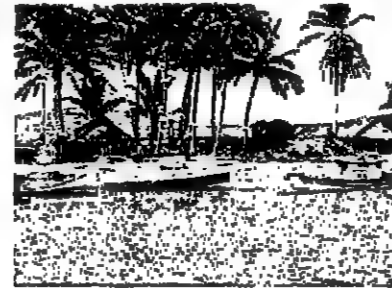
You can journey inland and stay at a real Iban longhouse. Watch the people living and working, especially weaving their stunning ikats, which are definitely worth buying. If you like your creature comforts, you can opt to stay lakeside at the Batang Ai Longhouse Resort. Run by the Hilton, it's the Iban concept but the facilities are more like home.

Over in Sabah, there are 30 different ethnic groups and southeast Asia's highest peak, Mount Kinabalu at 4,011 metres. Climb it and your trail will be adorned with over 1,000 different orchid species. Sandakan is the best base to explore the rainforest and numerous sanctuaries and reserves have opened recently. Oldest and most famous are the Sepilok Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre which rears them and returns them to the wild, and the Turtle Islands Park where endangered green and hawksbill turtles come to lay their eggs. For a special treat stay at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, an exclusive facility for natural history buffs with comfortable accommodation, good food and excellent guides.

If man-made history is more your thing, there's much to explore in Malaysia despite rapid modernisation. For a taste of old Malaysia, the streets of Georgetown in Penang, Kuching in Sarawak, and Melaka are priceless.

Melaka is Malaysia's oldest city, a port that was fought over by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and indigenous Malay sultans. Four hundred years later, the food still retains a Portuguese influence and the famous red Dutch town hall of 1650 and the fort still stand. The sense of history and cultural mix is strong. Charming Jonker Street, jam-packed with memorabilia shops — junk and antiques — from all eras, is a browser's paradise.

In Georgetown, streets full of old Chinese shophouses — many apparently held up by advertising posters from before the last war — is a busy working commercial centre. Tour it by trishaw — the locals still do — and you slip back a century.

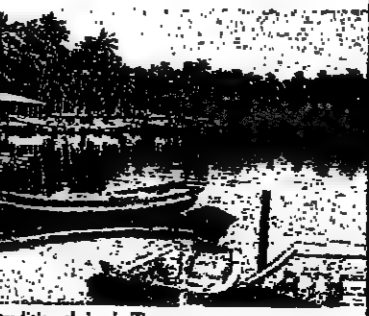


Hire small boats for island-hopping

For eco-travellers or adventurous types who want to compete rather than spectate, Malaysia has the space — 19 million hectares of forest, in fact, or 75 per cent of the country. Over a quarter is protected as natural parks and wildlife and bird sanctuaries. Over 14,500 species of flowering plants (including 2,500 species of trees) have so far been found in Malaysia's forests, along with 600 species of birds and more than 200 species of mammals — including such rarities as the Malayan tiger whose population as a result of conservation is on the increase.

The jungle is no walk in the park, and needs to be treated with respect. In Malaysia, however, you have the opportunity to experience this dramatic eco-system at many levels. You can dip your toe in by visiting wildlife sanctuaries, or go the full monty and trek for days inland to visit isolated tribes living as they have done for centuries. And there's plenty of choice in between.

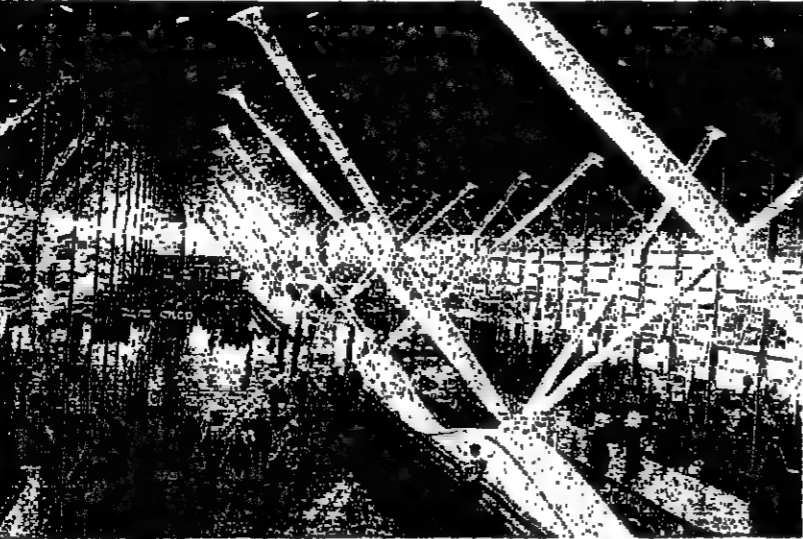
On peninsular Malaysia, Taman Negara national park has 2,500 square miles of 130 million-year-old rainforest. It's a great introduction to the wild with organised tours and transport by boat upriver to park headquarters. Here, you'll find the Taman Negara Resort with deluxe chalets, hot showers and great food. It's possible to go for an overnighter whilst tougher explorers can opt for an arduous nine-day trek up Mount Tahan (2,178 metres). A night in a hide can offer a glimpse of a tiger, tapir deer or wild buffalo. Further south is the lovely Endau-Rompin National Park which has only recently geared up for visitors. Perhaps that's why it's the last refuge in peninsular Malaysia of the rare Sumatran rhinoceros. Compared



Tranquility and tradition thrive in Terengganu

Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, is possibly one of the most delightful towns in Asia. Here, many architectural styles sit happily side by side along the meandering muddy river. The excellent Sarawak Museum is an anthropologists' dream. Fort Margherita every history-lover. A new promenade allows you to stroll along the riverbank watching the river traffic, the houses on stilts, the trishaws and other people soaking up the same slow and sultry atmosphere. It leaves a quietly intense and enduring image that sums up the tropics at their best in Malaysia.

This advertorial was created by the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board. Visit us at <http://tourism.gov.my>



The new state-of-the-art Kuala Lumpur International Airport is a welcome sight

With a society made up of Malays, Chinese, Indians and over 30 different tribal groups, no country in the tropics is as ethnically diverse. This is reflected in a rich cultural life, a calendar full of fascinating festivals, and glorious food. Malaysian cuisine is a smorgasbord of variety. Rich and spicy, it is never a test of endurance like some neighbouring cuisines, or a test of technical prowess: spoons and forks, not chopsticks, are the order of the day.

Damai Beach in Sarawak are hard to beat.

Stressed out execs can unwind in luxury at The Datalai in Langkawi, off Malaysia's northwest coast. Sensitively designed to merge with the rainforest as it cloaks the mountainside all the way down to the beach, this is one of the country's top hideaways. Excellent food is served outdoors by the beach or in restaurants that appear to float amongst the tree-

more budget conscious, Malaysia has options galore. Many resorts offer family packages, children's activity clubs, family rooms and even waive charges for youngsters sharing with parents. The Shangri-La's three properties in Penang — the Golden Sands, Palm Beach and the upmarket Rasa Sayang — sit side-by-side on Batu Feringi beach. Together they form probably the biggest, best equipped resort in Malaysia for families — cross-

## A Capital City For Business

The Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, was a sleepy green oasis in the 1970s. Today, it's the most exciting metropolis in southeast Asia — and a great centre for doing business.

In the past two decades Kuala Lumpur has changed almost beyond recognition. Expatriates of old living in their colonial mansions in leafy Damansara Heights would often pop home for lunch. Now they live in condominiums and take lunch in any one of scores of restaurants in five-star hotels and independent restaurants across the city, which is a good thing for two reasons. Today the traffic is so busy they wouldn't make it home in time, and besides the wife wouldn't be there. She'd be in one of dozens of fabulous shopping malls, having lunch or even out at work herself.

Sleepy no more, the symbols of the new Kuala Lumpur are Cesar Pelli's quarter-mile high Petronas Towers, the tallest building in the world and the gateway to the new commercial heart of the city. Built on the site of KL's old horse-racing track, the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) project is the world's biggest real estate development and the city's biggest bet on its future.

Eastward lies the Golden Triangle, another relatively new face of the city full of hotels, boutiques and shopping malls and offices. Many of the city's top hotels are in this area. By the end of the decade, KL will have over 26,000 hotel rooms and since they have traditionally been some of the best bargains in Asia, room rates look set to remain great value for business travellers for years to come.

Some of the city's most famous hotels like the Shangri-La, The Regent and the Hotel Istana, have been joined recently by the Ritz Carlton, Mandarin

Oriental, JW Marriott, Renaissance and Radisson. On the way is an Empress Hotel and a Duta Grand Hyatt. All are internationally renowned with first class facilities for executives both as individuals and groups.

KL is an excellent destination for meetings with the city and the country's attractions providing great opportunities for incentive programmes or post-conference getaways. For large conventions, there's the Putra World Trade Centre, a purpose-built venue of 21,000sqm of convention and exhibition space. The Plenary Hall can host 3,000 delegates for a convention, 1,600 for banquets.

The Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur has a pillarless ballroom to seat 2,000 classroom-style while the Ritz Carlton, Istana and Hilton also offer great meeting and conference venues. For pre- or post-conference tours or incentives, Malaysia has

options by the thousand (see main story). For dining and entertaining, KL boasts a huge selection of restaurants encompassing every Asian cuisine and a score of western. From hawkler fare to local coffee-shops to the best French and Italian cuisine, KL is hard to beat. After dark, KL has long had a reputation as a fun town and that is growing — and there's more than karaoke, bars and clubs.

Amongst other cultural options, the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra attracts first class soloists and conductors, such as Dutch conductor Kees Bakels, and runs an active programme from its new concert hall at the KLCC.

Night-time is also the time for shopping at the famous pasar malam, the night markets which tantalisingly change location throughout the week. The recession and exchange rate fall has meant Malaysia is a bargain hunters dream and just about everything can be found in KL. From electronics and designer labels in modern malls like Lot 10 and Star Hill to antiques and handicrafts at the nostalgic Central Market in the older part of the city.

But instead of buying your partner a gift from Malaysia, why not bring him or her (and the kids) with you. The fabulous new Kuala Lumpur International Airport offers state of the art facilities and connections to over 102 cities around the world and shuttle services to all major Malaysian cities and resorts.

There really is no better time or place to combine business and pleasure than in Malaysia today.



Getting together for business at KL's Putra World Trade Centre Convention Hall

Entrance

of homes

TRAVEL

# Classical caves in a wonder world

John Westbrooke encounters big surprises and slippery footing when he decides to explore south-west Slovenia's vast underworld

Slovenia's presiding deity is Triglav - actually a three-headed mountain, 9,300ft high, but pagans saw it as a three-headed god. One head controlled the sky, much of it filled with Alps; another ran the earth, a rolling green countryside still half-covered with woodland.

The third ruled the underworld. Slovenia is one of the smallest countries in Europe, just ahead of Luxembourg, but that is only the above-ground part. There is also an underground Slovenia. In the south-west region called the Karst, a world of wonders.

Among the country's 16,000 underground caves, Postojna's are the best known and, at 17 miles long, Europe's biggest. Visitors see only 3½ miles, partly in an electric train.

Much less known, but dramatic all the same, are the Skocjan caves. Virgil gave them a mention, and they are on UNESCO's world heritage list. Guides point out formations that look like (say) pipe organs, if you use your imagination.

One of the caves is 100 metres high - or low, if you prefer: the path goes across a bridge halfway up, and the rumble of the river far below echoes off the stalactites far above.

This may be unnerving for

people who don't like heights; indeed, claustrophobes and agoraphobes alike may find it heavy going. No one mentions this, but the Skocjan caves are hard work. Inside, I found the paths dimly lit, slippery and steep, and the temperature unexpectedly warm. No train, but fortunately there is a funicular at the exit to carry visitors back up to ground level. Thanks, I needed that.

Not all of the Slovenian **Erasmus was a 15th century robber baron who used to steal from the rich to give to the poor**

underworld can be visited, but it makes its mark none the less. There is, for instance, Lake Cerknica, which sometimes covers 10 square miles and sometimes becomes just a grassy meadow, as its water seeps away into the rock.

At Predjama, east of the capital, a castle has been built into a particularly high cave mouth, its back walls still bare stone. In the 13th century, it was home to

Erasmus, a robber baron who used to steal from the rich to give to the poor.

The authorities besieged him, but to no avail: he constantly slipped away out of the back door and through the network of caves to seek provisions, and used to infuriate his enemies by catapulting roast ox and cherries at them.

Alas, he met an inglorious death when he was betrayed and bombarded while in a room perched on an outside wall, "where even the Turkish sultan has to go alone", as the chroniclers delicately put it, doing "the work which no lord can delegate to his deputy". Sitting on the toilet, in fact. The castle, much expanded but still clinging to the rockface among wooded hills, is now a great tourist site, and the fatal outhouse is designated The Unlucky Spot.

Sitting at one of the crossroads between east and west, Slovenia has seen plenty of fighting through the years. It left Yugoslavia in 1991; the 10 days of border skirmishes seemed dreadful at the time - 86 people died - but have paled beside the genocidal bloodshed that followed as other republics broke away. Slovenes still speak warmly of the beauties of Croatia, to the south; they tell anti-Montenegrin jokes; but if any



Lake Bled: visitors can ring the bell and make a wish in the island church

had a good word to say about Serbs, I did not hear it.

It turns out that Slovenia is not eastern European at all, nor Balkan. It is pure central Europe, touching Italy, Austria and Hungary as well as Croatia. In its capital, Ljubljana, Mahler conducted and Napoleon slept.

Ljubljana was founded by Jason and his argonauts, running away with the

Golden Fleece; they sailed up the Danube from the Black Sea, and killed the local dragon. Take that as some sort of metaphor for early Greek influence.

It was in the 13th century that it started to become one of the Continent's prettiest capitals. A castle on a hill overlooks narrow streets of Baroque and Secession buildings; three little bridges side by side cross a winding river to the main square.

Look up to spot the elegant statues and curlicues. When I peered behind the facades and into the courtyards, some of the older buildings looked tatty and tumbledown, but the town seems to have escaped the drabness of big communist

cities. Think instead of smaller centres such as Tallinn or Vilnius, not important enough to destroy.

Down by the sea the architecture is more Adriatic. Piran, small and chic, is half Venice, half Dubrovnik, a village on a peninsula, made of stone and marble, gleaming in sun and rain. There is also Portoroz, a bigger resort. Koper, a working port, Izola, a fishing village... and that's about it.

Slovenia's coast, sandwiched between Trieste and Croatia, is only 26 miles long. Tourists come not for the few rocky beaches but for the lakes and mountains, the spas and the skiing.

Lake Bled, with the Alps

behind it, is the loveliest of the resorts. Its chief feature is an island with a 17th century church and bell tower on it. You can ring the bell and make a wish; everyone does, which must weary the locals as the peals echo across the water and back from the green hills.

No motor boats are allowed, so to get there take one of the broad wooden gondolas, propelled by a man in the stern with two oars (a hereditary job, and much prized). Alternatively, just stroll around the lake, about four miles in all, past willows and waterlilies, horse-drawn flares and fishermen.

You can stay in farms and guesthouses, but for the best

lake lookout, try the Villa Bled - Tito's summer palace, now open to guests - or the Grand Hotel Toplice, in the middle of town. Wake up, fling open the shutters, and drink in the alpine air as you gaze out over one of Europe's sublime views.

John Westbrooke was a guest of the Slovenian Tourist Board (011-287 7138).

Tourist operators featuring Slovenia include Slovenia Pursuits (01763-852646), Inghams (0181-780 4444) and Thomson (0890-502365).

Adria airline (0171-431 0143) flies to Ljubljana from London six times a week, and Manchester, British Airways (0845-222111) three times.

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SKIING HAIG SIMONIAN

## If you feel the need for speed

In a matter of days, a handful of brave young men will risk their lives hurtling themselves off a near vertical mountain 2,700 metres (8,800ft) high.

Their endeavour will not be for obvious financial gain. The participants hope to become the first men to ski at more than 350km/h (156mph). That is not far off the cruising speed of France's *Train à Grande Vitesse* and faster than most sports cars. Speed skiing, say its sponsors, is the fastest non-motorised sport on earth.

Leading the pack will be Philippe Billy, an unobtrusive 32-year-old who could be mistaken for a computer nerd or library assistant. However unremarkable his demeanour, Billy won fame last year after setting the world record of 243.9km/h. He hopes to do better this time.

Whatever its merits, the *Forêt Blanche* is almost unfamiliar to the French as it is to foreigners. Its obscurity lies largely in its inaccessibility - along with the widespread belief that the southern Alps have plentiful sun, but pitiful snow. Thierry Auzet, head of the local tourist office, admits Vars could be easier to reach. But - this season apart - he disputes the cliché about its snow. "We have a record which is as

twang of the Midi betrays the origins of most visitors. With *Marseille* three hours away and departmental capitals such as Gap and Digne closer still, the clientele is southern French.

At Risoul, the mix is slightly different. Active marketing by private sector developers has attracted foreigners to fill the troughs outside the peak French holidays, says Pascal Pegny, who looks after snowboarding. At the peak, up to 30 per cent of Risoul's skiers come via mid-market tour operators from the UK and the Netherlands. Vars, the bigger and older of the two vil-

The two resorts have tried to overcome their geographic disadvantages by taking a relaxed approach to skiing and by extending a warm welcome to snowboarders and to the young in particular. This year's speed-skiing contest at Vars will form the centrepiece of a more generalised celebration of alpine daring, dubbed "Mad Masters", and modelled on the extreme X-Games of the US. Apart from speed skiing, the acts of daring will include acrobatic snowboarding and racing down pistes on specially converted mountain bikes.

But both resorts must upgrade their accommodation if they are really to make a mark internationally. The best hotel in Vars is a lone three-star. Risoul has just opened its second hotel - another two-star - taking its total beds to 200. Vars should have its first four-star next year, while Club Med and Pierre et Vacances are planning three-star equivalents.

Neither resort has any delusions about challenging Courchevel for France's beautiful people. The better is, perhaps, for it is on their combination of good value accommodation and reasonable skiing in an unfamiliar setting that their appeal primarily resides.

Haig Simonian's visit to Vars was organised by the French National Tourist Office in London. Information on 0991-244123. Air France has three flights a day to Lyons from London Heathrow on weekdays and twice daily at weekends. Reservations 0181-742 6600. Hertz has the largest car rental fleet at Lyons airport. Reservations on 0990-906090.

For skiers familiar with Savoie and Isère who want something different and more modestly priced, Forêt Blanche has much to commend it

good as anything in the northern Alps, if not better." Whatever the meteorological data, the maps do not lie: Vars and Risoul are a long way from any airport. Turin is closest, but restricted in its international connections: Grenoble suits the French, but is less useful for foreigners, who must change aircraft in Paris first. Lyons, the best compromise, is also farthest afield, although the 270km drive south-east, via the mighty Chambon Dam and Col du Lautaret, is worth the journey alone.

Even locals admit Vars and Risoul draw few first-time skiers to France. Most gravitate towards bigger, better known northerly resorts such as Chamonix, Val d'Isère or the Trois Vallées, or even Megève. In the *Forêt Blanche*, the nasal

lages, has most of the skiing. But Risoul, a purpose-built "third generation" resort, wins hands down on looks.

Its wood-clad, pitch-roofed apartments lie atop a panoramic terrace. The south-facing amphitheatre of bars and restaurants at the foot of the pistes is more Italian piazza than French station. But even the squat apartment blocks of Vars are well camouflaged by the region's larch trees.

For skiers familiar with Savoie and Isère who want something different - and are not obsessed with endless piste bashing or flaunting their furs - the *Forêt Blanche* has much to recommend it. Apart from the two bowls immediately above each resort, the saddle between Vars and Risoul has a wide variety of runs.

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TRAVEL

# Big cats take pride in mastering disguise

Guy Marks joins a game tracking safari in the Serengeti and has surprising success

It was an hour before dawn when the roar of a lion pierced the night air and jolted me from my slumber. I lay in my tent, listening to the unmistakable deep growling sounds as they called out again. The big cats were prowling somewhere out there on the plains.

I felt safe in the tent, comfortable and warm. I knew the lions were unlikely to roam into the camp, it smelled too much of man, fire and danger. Besides, a lion on the kill does not roar, it silently stalks through the grass and takes its prey by surprise. No, this noise was no danger to me, but it was exciting nonetheless. It was a sound that evoked the essence of Africa, and marked the first day of my safari in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park.

## We watched gazelle and impala skipping through the grass, and giraffe casually taking their daily stroll

After what seemed an eternity, the camp stirred. I could hear the safari staff moving about, stoking the cook fires and charting in low murmuring tones. A voice asked if I wanted a hot shower. The tents were as big as cabins and furnished with real beds; each had a shower and toilet tent behind it. The shower was an ingenious contraption — a rose fixed to a bag that could be filled with hot water and hoisted up on a pole. I declined the offer and was left a bowl of hot water for my morning's ablutions.

We had arrived at the camp after nightfall and I was keen to take in my new surroundings. I was out of the tent within moments of being called and was greeted by Mtill, our driver guide.

"Wapi simba?" I asked Mtill in my best and very limited Swahili. Mtill grinned. I am not sure if it was my eagerness to know where the lion was or my attempt at his language that amused him.

"Very close," he nodded in the direction of the open plains. "Don't stray far from the camp."

The air was surprisingly cold, too cold to sit around doing nothing, so I walked a little. Heeding Mtill's warning, I strayed just far enough away to view the camp. It was nestled under acacia trees at the foot of Naabi Hill, a small mound of vegetation close to the south entrance of the national park. The sun was just rising and casting long shadows and dap-

pled light across the tents. In all other directions there was nothing to see but short, dry grass, miles and miles of African savannah, and not a lion in sight.

Back at the heart of the camp, my safari companions had risen, and I joined them for coffee around the resurrected remnants of last night's fire. We talked about our night under canvas, the noises, the lions and how far away they might have been. We devoted our first game drive of the day to tracking them down. Mtill was right, they were close.

About 200 yards from the camp the Land Rover slowed, I could not see a thing until we were right on top of the unsuspecting felines. Their camouflage was perfect. The grass did not begin to cover the animals, yet their colour was a perfect match and, lying low within it, they had mastered the magic of invisibility.

This was a large pride of six young females, watched over from a distance by a magnificent male. They were sulkily unmoved by the clicking and whirring of cameras and went about their routine of surveying the distant landscape and occasionally play-fighting with each other.

We had to move on; there were hundreds of square miles of Serengeti for us to explore and a host of other animals that would unwittingly take centre stage that day. We watched herds of gazelle and impala skipping through the grass, and giraffe casually taking their daily stroll. Hyenas lazied with their heads poking out of burrowed dens or played, sniffling each other, and launched themselves into vigorous snarling bouts of dogfight.

By lunchtime we had seen more game than I would have thought possible in what, at first glance, seemed such an empty



Time for lunch: there is probably more chance of seeing a lion in the Serengeti than in any other park in Africa

# Baboons, beaches, mud baths and bush babies

After flying in, Sarah Murray finds everything she could hope for — plus cocktails — in a tented camp that was once part of the British empire

Bucket and spade packed, wet wipes securely stashed and a Thermos of coffee at the ready, we are off at last. Father's in the driving seat, I'm next to him and mother is in the back with maps and children, mopping up the sea — it's a regular family holiday. The only difference is that father can read the New Scientist from cover to cover as he speeds us towards our destination.

This is because we are in a six-seater Cessna flying over Tanzania and Tsavo National Park on our way to the Kenyan coast. Below are thousands of acres of dry bush land severed by brilliant red lines that are dirt roads and punctured by the vast crater that contains Lake Chala. To the east are the Shimba Hills and with the clear blue of a vast African sky ahead of us, father needs only to glance up occasionally in order to steer us on a smooth course to Mal-

indi. Such easy passage through air is not mirrored on land when we arrive in Kenya.

Perched on the coast, Malindi is where Italian tourists head for sun and sand by day and versions of their television programmes translated into live cabaret shows by night. The town is packed with tacky pizza houses, ice-cream parlours and boys selling copies of *La Repubblica*.

Malindi is not, however, an important international hub. Far from it. Once on the Tarmac at the tiny airport, we are informed that the stamp required to validate our visas is kept in an office some 20 minutes into

the town. So leaving father to unpack the aircraft, we pile into a car and head off, the immigration officer leading the way in his own beat-up vehicle.

The immigration office is surprisingly informal. Drawing us up to it by car, we are confronted by a couple of rusty iron gates fastened by a heavy padlock on an equally impressive chain. This, it turns out, is the local mosque — one of many on a mosquito-ridden coast where the influence of Islam and the Arab world dominate.

Surveyed by a beady-eyed mullah, we climb a set of stairs next to the mosque. The office is furnished only with a filing cabinet, three chairs and a wooden desk — its drawer containing the vital stamp. A faded black and white photograph of President Moi peers at us from the wall.

It is stark and depressing — until our immigration officer opens up the door and windows. Suddenly, there is the sea, fishing boats bobbing on a shimmering blue surface. Lovely.



Remote and rugged: a tributary of the Tana River, Kenya

Our exclamations of pleasure seem to cheer our beat-up and speed up the proceedings considerably. Soon, stamps in passport, we are ready to head farther up the coast towards our destination — Tana River and one of Kenya's most remote bush camps.

As we fly from Malindi, beach huts and ice-cream parlours thin out until we are left with pearly white sand dunes piled into tiny folds by the relentless wind. Startled by the sound of the

15-mile stretch of immaculate sand that is Willie's backyard. For, set on giant sand dunes, Tana Delta Camp is in a unique position. On one side is the beach with acres of fine white sand and warm waves. To the other is the bush, where monkeys, baboons,

same dune is what Willie calls the "honeymoon suite". This must surely be one of the most dramatically positioned bedrooms on the planet. In a giant bed, sitting on a wooden platform dug into the sand, you can walk to dawn breaking over a generous slice of one of the Tana River's mud-laden tributaries as it pushes its way through mangrove swamps.

At sunset the next day, we are in the mangroves in a small boat, winding through oily-smooth waters. Great Goliath Herons rise into the air with an ease that puts the pounding motor of our Cessna to shame.

Weaver birds decorate the trees with the small baskets they call home. The sun is setting. A large croc slides down from the mud as we pass by. Small fish leap out of the water in the boat's wake and a blue moon rises over the mangroves. The place looks as if it has not changed in centuries.

It has. Fishermen using drag nets are relieving the bay of its prawns, destroying much of the coral in the process. Although the area has been designated as a wetlands protected environment, this remains of little practical use without funds. "Conservation is what it's all about," says Willie, who is setting up a trust for the area and seeking foreign donors to support its operation. "If the tourists come, their money will help sustain conservation efforts."

Unfortunately, the tourists are not coming in sufficient numbers, especially as crime and violence in Nairobi — and on some roads outside the capital — give Kenya a growing reputation as a danger zone.

Back in the mess at the Tana Delta Camp can be contacted through Chris Flatt, Bush Homes of East Africa, Box 58228, Nairobi. Tel: +2548 571661/571641/571648; fax: 571665; e-mail: bushhomes@africaonline.co.ke

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TRAVEL

# Big brown eyes and serious attitude

Elizabeth Robinson's partner knows his own mind on a trail ride in Scotland

My escort had big brown eyes and a serious attitude. He also had an attitude. When he first saw me the look was pure contempt. When we parted I stroked his thick hair adoringly. I fancy I saw a glimmer of fondness cross his face.

Nomad, who also became my confident and sometimes saviour, was assigned to me by Fiona Hill, who runs Highland Horseback, Britain's longest trail ride. For four days and 100 miles, Nomad would take me from Huntly in Aberdeenshire to Kingussie in the centre of Scotland through Britain's own wilderness.

Nomad was so called, I decided, for his habit of constantly wandering, especially each time I tried to climb into the saddle. In spite of our battle of wits, we developed a mutual trust. He was rock solid over all terrain, enthusiastic at a gallop and a keen jumper. All 10 horses on our trip were supremely fit, sustaining a good pace over all gradients for up to six hours a day.

Our party, which included two guides, rode on endurance saddles, which provide greater support and comfort than traditional tack, but the long hours in the saddle and the frequent flat-out cavalry charges means the trail is not for the inexperienced or faint-hearted rider.

Our first test came just over an hour into the journey when, after hacking along one of the few roads of the trip, we entered a field. "We'll canter here," said Hill at the front. She confided in me later, after we'd all caught our breath from the surge in horsepower, that some riders drop out or drop off at that point.

Certainly on our first morning we lost a number of water bottles, thrown out of saddlebags, as well as one rider, although she gamely joined us for the rest of the week. For those who persist, the rewards are enormous, for this is the roof of Britain, where the skies are big and the scenery magnificent.

Of course the weather in Scotland can be varied, and on the first day we had most of it. At one point needle-like raindrops drove into our faces, groans of

discomfort whipped out of earshot by the roaring wind.

Thankfully the weather was kinder to us after that, allowing us to relax into a placid reverie at the wonder of the Highlands. We were alone, trespassing on the daily comings and goings of hares, buzzards, rabbits and grouse. Once a troop of red deer surveyed us from a neighbouring hilltop and, deciding we were neither interesting nor a threat, disappeared over the brow.

We reached a glen that had no name, wide but sheltered and entirely silent. When we dismounted it was a race to remove the tack before the horses threw themselves on to the ground to roll and scratch their hot backs over the cool and springy grass-covered turf.

We picnicked in the gracious surroundings of riverbanks or open glens, watching the horses roam free and filling themselves with the abundant sweet grass and clear water. "They'll all be asleep in 10 minutes," said Hill at one such stop. Sure enough they were. Even the sud-

den roar of a low-flying military aircraft did not rouse them. They only moved again when they were roused and ready.

Each day the scenery unfolded around us, merging crags with blooming heather, forested trails with stony brooks. On the harder ground we could gallop for what seemed like miles, only to have our progress arrested by bogland.

It was here that we departed to one of the horses, Mrs O'Reilly, who, as her name suggests, was a dependable cob. She was also a champion "bogsniffer" and could find the most passable trail. We followed her careful tracks, each horse squelching through the wet black mire.

"If your horse sinks in the bog, jump off," Hill had warned us. Nomad was the only one to succumb, and I had to jump. Poor Nomad floundered and panicked. When he finally struggled out of the depths, he stood quivering like a nervous foal, while I flussed and petted, and tried not to think of the mud I was caked in.

The outlines on the Ordnance Survey maps did not do justice to the scenes in which we found ourselves. Hill had nicknamed the patch of green that bordered the Quoich Water on the map "Blackadder Forest". From afar it looked like any other woodland. Once in its depths, however, we found ourselves in an eerie and magical wonderland that whispered of hobbits and homunculi.



Scotland: the roof of Britain where the skies are big and the scenery magnificent

Bleached and twisted Scots pine trees hunkered along the bright green hummocky forest floor; ancient knotted remnants of the Great Caledonian Forest which, in olden times, covered the north of Scotland. The ride over the humpy ground was like a rollercoaster as our horses picked up speed to dart under boughs and over bumps, turning all the time like carousels around the trees' trunks.

Each night we untacked and fed our mounts, which were turned loose in a field. From there the minibus which carried our luggage each day transported us to a welcoming hotel where we could enjoy hot baths and fine meals before a hearty meal, recounting the events of the day.

We rested in romantically named towns: Tomintoul, Braemar and Kingussie. One night was spent in the remote Garnishiel Lodge; a former shooting lodge "is there a dining room in Scotland with a view as fine as that?" exclaimed one of our number on entering. And she, being a Scot, was qualified to know.

I was sorry to dismount Nomad for the last time at Kingussie. True, we hadn't got off to the best of starts - but grudging respect had turned into a happy partnership. I wouldn't have done the journey with anyone else.

Highland Horseback (call 01466 700304) runs 200-mile treks through the Scottish Highlands from May to September. A full 10-night break costs £1,150, while the five-night ride costs £375.

TRAVEL

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WEEKEND INVESTOR

REVIEW

Tomkins plans cashback • Wassall on acquisition trail • Dow hits the 10,000 mark

Hutchings buys into the bigtime and hands over the cash

If the stock market falls out of bed next month, the air will be blue in many corporate HQs. But nowhere will it be bluer than at Tomkins...

By buying 15 per cent of its own shares, Tomkins will disgorge some £430m. Until this week Hutchings has always protested that he had to hang on to his cash...

Even at the time the market was sceptical about the engineering conglomerate getting into the notoriously stodgy broad market...

Tomkins' shares are worth about the same now as they were in early 1985, at which point its cumulative expenditure on acquisitions had run to all of \$6m...

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DIRECTORS' DEALINGS: Confidence at Vickers



Directors continue to deal on the back of year-end results. One example is at Vickers, which announced results on the March 4, writes David Turner...

There has been selling at Avis Europe, in the transport sector, where chairman Alan Cuthbert sold 600,000 shares at 247p on March 10...

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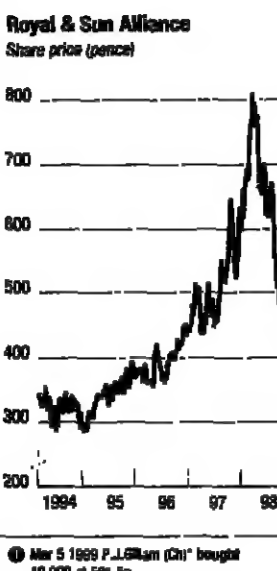


Table with columns: Company, Sector, Shares, Value (£'000), No of directors. Lists transactions for various companies like Edridge, Pope, Pilon, Tandem Group, etc.

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Table titled 'Last week's interim results'. Columns: Company, Sector, Half year, Pre-tax profit (£m), Interim dividend per share (p). Lists companies like Alliance Unichem, Avia Property, Avia Property, etc.

Table titled 'Current takeover bids and mergers'. Columns: Company bid for, Value of bid (£m), Market price, P/E ratio, Value of bid (£m), Bidder. Lists companies like Avia Property, Avia Property, Avia Property, etc.

Table titled 'Last week's preliminary results'. Columns: Company, Sector, Year, Pre-tax profit (£m), Earnings per share (p), Dividend per share (p). Lists companies like Alliance Unichem, Avia Property, Avia Property, etc.

